A TREASURY OF MYSTIC TERMS

PART I

THE PRINCIPLES OF MYSTICISM

VOLUME 6

THE SOUL IN EXILE

SCIENCE OF THE SOUL RESEARCH CENTRE

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JOHN DAVIDSON

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WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

A Treasury of Mystic Terms has been compiled using the collective skills of an international team of researchers, contributors, assistant editors and readers with a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. All members of the team are spiritual seekers, most of whom have found inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the mystics of Beas in India. All those involved have given freely to this project, both as a source of inspiration for themselves, and as a way of showing to others the essential unity behind all the apparent variety in religion, philosophy and mysticism.

Everybody has a perspective or a bias – coloured glasses through which they view the world. So although every attempt has been made to handle each entry within its own religious or mystical context, if any particular perspective is detected, it will inevitably be that of the contributors and their perception of mysticism. This does not mean, of course, that the contributors have always been in agreement. The preparation of the *Treasury* has often resulted in healthy debate!

SEE VOLUME 1 FOR THE LIST OF RESEARCHERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Contents

Acknowledgements

THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST *DHAMMAPADA* are founded mostly upon the work of S. Radhakrishnan and Narada Thera.

Many scholarly translations of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* into European languages have been made from defective Pahlavi translations. The translations here are from the Avestan, and are based largely on the original work of Dr I.R.S. Taraporewala.

Quotations from the *Ādi Granth* are from the English translation of Manmohan Singh.

Most of the translations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* have drawn upon the earlier translation of Swāmī Tapasyānanda.

The sayings of Heraclitus are found only as fragments, quoted in the works of other writers of antiquity. Various scholarly numbering systems exist for these fragments, the system employed here being that used by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton, 1959).

Most of the translations of Rūmī's *Maśnavī* are based upon the work of R.A. Nicholson.

The indigenous Guaraní of eastern Paraguay, made up of three large subgroups – the Mbyá, the Paí Cayuá and the Avá-Chiripá – are described in books and articles by the most notable experts in this field, Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, León Cádogan, Alfred Métraux and Egon Schaden. Most of the information used for the Guaraní mystical terms derives from these scholars' studies of the Mybá and Avá-Chiripá. If a term is general to all indigenous Guaraní, it is labelled (G); if a term is known only to apply to the Avá-Chiripá subgroup, it is labelled (AC).

The transliteration conventions used for all Avá-Chiripá terms are the same as those used in Miguel Alberto Bartolomé's article, *Shamanism and Religion Among the Avá-Chiripá,* which resulted from his field studies in the northeastern region of Paraguay in 1968 and 1969. Bartolomé explains that since Paraguayan Guaraní has an officially recognized written form, he does not use phonetic symbols except the letter 'y' for the sixth guttural vowel.

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Thanks are also due to Dr John Smith, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University, for making specialist character fonts available to us.

Abbreviations

General

cf.	*confero* (L. I compare), compare
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (L. for the sake of example), for example
ff.	following (pages, lines, etc.)
i.e.	*id est* (L. that is), that is (to say), in other words
lit.	literally
p.	page
pp.	pages
viz.	*videlicet*, from the Latin *videre* (to see) + *licet* (it is permissible), used to specify items
▸2	See *A Treasury of Mystic Terms*, Part II

Dates

b.	born
c.	*circa*, about
d.	died
fl.	flourished
AH	*Anno Hegirae*, the Islamic dating system, from 622 CE, the Hegira *(al-Hijrah)*, the year of Muḥammad's flight to Madīnah
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era

Languages

A	Arabic
AC	Avá-Chiripá
Am	Aramaic
Av	Avestan
C	Chinese
G	Guaraní
Gk	Greek
H	Hindi
He	Hebrew
J	Japanese

L	Latin
M	Marathi
Md	Mandaean
P	Persian
Pa	Pali
Pu	Punjabi
Pv	Pahlavi
S	Sanskrit
Su	Sumerian
T	Tibetan
U	Urdu

Sources Cited

See *Bibliography* for full details of published works. Published collections of the writings of Indian Saints have been referred to in source references as below. Other collections published as the *Bānī, Granthāvalī, Padāvalī* or *Shabdāvalī* of various Indian Saints have been similarly abbreviated.

Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī	*Bānī*
Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*
Kabīr Granthāvalī	*Granthāvalī*
Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak	*Bījak*
Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah	*Sākhī Sangrah*
Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh	*Kullīyāt*
Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu	*Sudhā Sindhu*
Nāmdev kī Hindi Padāvalī	*Padāvalī*
Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī	*Vāṇī*
Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā	*Gāthā*
Tulsīdās kī Bārahmāsī	*Bārahmāsī*
Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī	*Shabdāvalī*

Other texts cited are abbreviated as follows:

AA	"Apocrypha Anecdota II", ed. & tr. M.R. James.
AAA	*Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2 (translation), ed. & tr. W.R. Wright.
AF1–2	*The Apostolic Fathers,* 2 vols., tr. Kirsopp Lake. See *Acknowledgements.*
AGMB	*Akbar the Greatest Moghul,* S.M. Burke.
AH1–2	*Against Heresies,* in *The Writings of Irenaeus,* 2 vols., tr. A. Roberts and W.H. Rambaud.

AMBF	*Aḥādīs-i Masnavī*, B. Furūzānfar.
ANT	*The Apocryphal New Testament*, tr. M.R. James. See *Acknowledgements.*
AOT	*The Apocryphal Old Testament*, ed. H.E.D. Sparks. See *Acknowledgements.*
APOT1–2	*The Apocrypha and Pseudoepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 vols., R.H. Charles.
ASLV	*Anurāg Sāgar*, Kabīr; Lakshmī Venkaṭeshvar Press.
ASP	*Ancilla to the pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels,* Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Kathleen Freeman.
ASP1–2	*Arnobius of Sicca: The Case Against the Pagans (Adversus Nationes)*, 2 vols., tr. G.E. McCracken.
AW	*The Ancient Wisdom: An Outline of Theosophical Teaching*, Annie Besant.
AYA	*The Holy Qur'ān*, tr. & commentary 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī.
BAK	*The Bahir (Illumination)*, tr. & commentary Aryeh Kaplan. See *Acknowledgements.*
BC	*The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex*, tr. Violet MacDermot. See *Acknowledgements.*
BDB	*Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's*, K.V. Zetterstéen.
BE	*Book of Enoch*, tr. R.H. Charles.
BES	*Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, as told through John G. Neihardt. See *Acknowledgements.*
BGT	*Bhagavad Gītā*, tr. Swāmī Tapasyānanda.
BLBR	*The Book of Legends (Sefer ha-Aggadah): Legends from the Talmud and Midrash*, ed. Hayim Nahmun Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, tr. W.G. Braude. See *Acknowledgements.*
BLT	*The Book of Lieh-Tzu*, tr. A.C. Graham. See *Acknowledgements.*
BMP	*Bruchstücke manichäisch-parthischer Parabelsammlungen*, I. Colditz.
BNT	"Babies Are Not What We Thought: Call for a New Paradigm", David B. Chamberlain.
BS	*Bulleh Shah: Love-intoxicated Iconoclast*, J.R. Puri and T.R. Shangari.
BSB	*Bhīkhā Sāhib kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
CAG	"Coptic Apocryphal Gospels", tr. F. Robinson.
CCC	"Cellular Consciousness and Conception: An Interview with Dr Graham Farrant", interviewed by Steven Raymond.
CDB1–2	*Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī*, 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
CDP	*The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including the Letters*, ed. Y.E. Hamilton and H. Cairns.

CDSS	*The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes. See *Acknowledgements.*
CEI	*The Concise Encyclop(a)edia of Islam,* Cyril Glassé. See *Acknowledgements.*
CGM	*The Call of the Great Master,* Daryai Lal Kapur.
CH	*The Clementine Homilies,* tr. Thomas Smith *et al.*
CIB	*A Child is Born,* Lennart Nilsson.
CPM	*The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans,* tr. E.S. Drower. See *Acknowledgements.*
CPS	*Commentaire sur les paradoxes des soufis (Sharh-e Shathīyāt),* Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi, ed. Henry Corbin.
CR	*Clementine Recognitions,* tr. Thomas Smith.
CSA	*The Confessions of Saint Augustine,* tr. E.B. Pusey.
CTW	*Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings,* tr. Burton Watson. See *Acknowledgements.*
DAA	*The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle,* tr. G. Phillips.
DDS	*Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
DE	*The Discourses of Epictetus,* ed. Christopher Gill, tr. Robin Hard.
DG1–2	*Dariyā Granthāvalī,* 2 vols., D.B. Shāstrī.
DHA	*Dīvān-i Khwājah Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī,* ed. Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim Anjavī Shīrāzī.
DHM	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ;* Malik Ghulām Muḥammad & Sons.
DHWC	*The Dīvān-i-Ḥāfiẓ,* 2 vols., Khwāja Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad-i-Ḥāfiẓ-i-Shīrāzī, tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke.
DIH	*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* ed. Qāzi Sajjād Ḥusayn.
DL	*Divine Light,* Maharaj Charan Singh.
DP1–4	*The Dialogues of Plato,* 4 vols., tr. B. Jowett.
DPN	*The Dhammapada: Pāli Text and Translation, with Stories in Brief and Notes,* Narada Thera.
DRA	*Discourses of Rūmī,* tr. A.J. Arberry.
DSM	*Discourses on Sant Mat,* Hazur Maharaj Sawan Singh.
DSS	*Sahasrānī,* Dariyā Sāhib, Hindi ms., tr. in *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
DSSB	*Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
DSSU	*The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered,* R. Eisenman and M. Wise.
DSZ	*The Divine Songs of Zarathustra,* I.J.S. Taraporewala.
EDA1–2	*Epictetus: The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments,* 2 vols., tr. W.A. Oldfather.
EGP	*Early Greek Philosophy,* Jonathan Barnes.
EHL	*Empedocles,* Helle Lambridis. See *Acknowledgements.*
EJCD	*Encyclopedia Judaica,* CD-ROM.
EPE	*The Enduring Effects of Prenatal Experience,* Ludwig Janus.
ESHS1–4	*Sancti Ephraemi Syri Hymni et Sermones,* 4 vols., T.J. Lamy.

ETCA	"The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria", R.P. Casey.
FFC	*From Fetus to Child,* Alessandra Piontelli.
FFF	*Fragments of a Faith Forgotten,* G.R.S. Mead.
FH	*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam,* Ibn al-'Arabī, ed. Abū al-'Alā' 'Afīfī.
FIN	*Firefly in the Night,* Irene Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
FLI	*Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Ta'bīrāt-i 'Irfānī,* Sayyid Ja'far Sajjādī.
FLTM1–9	*Farhang-i Lughāt va-Ta'bīrāt-i Maśnavī,* 9 vols., Ṣādiq Gawharīn.
FNI1–15	*Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf,* 15 vols., Javād Nūrbakhsh.
FSC	*Four Sufi Classics: Salaman and Absal* (Jami, tr. Edward Fitzgerald), *The Niche for Lights* (al-Ghazzali, tr. W.H.T. Gairdner), *The Way of the Seeker* (Hakim Sanai, ed., abr. & tr. David Pendlebury), *The Abode of Spring* (Jami, abr. & tr. David Pendlebury).
FTN	"The Forty (Two) Traditions of An-Nawawi", tr. Eric F.F. Bishop.
GJ	*The Gospel of Jesus: In Search of His Original Teachings,* John Davidson.
GJB	*The Gnostic John the Baptizer: Selections from the Mandaean John-Book,* G.R.S. Mead.
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GRJ	*The Gnostic Religion,* H. Jonas.
GS	*The Gnostic Scriptures,* Bentley Layton.
GSR	*Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia,* tr. H-J. Klimkeit. See *Acknowledgements.*
GST	*Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms,* 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshāni, tr. Nabil Safwat.
GSV	*Gheranda Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. See *Acknowledgements.*
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HH1–4	*Herodotus,* 4 vols., tr. A.D. Godley.
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HIMA1–3	*History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages,* 3 vols., H. Lea.
HPW	*Heraclitus,* P. Wheelwright. See *Acknowledgements.*
HQSA	*The Holy Qur'ān: English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary;* Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.
HR2	*Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan II,* F.W.K. Müller.

HS	*The Hymn of the Soul: Contained in the Syriac Acts of Thomas,* ed. & tr. A.A. Bevan.
HV1–25	*Hindi Vishvakosh,* 25 vols., ed. Nagendranāth Vasu.
HVP	*Commentary of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras,* A. Dacier, tr. N. Rowe.
HYP	*Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* tr. Pancham Singh.
IA	*Indian Architecture: Islamic Period* (vol. 2), Percy Brown.
ICD	*An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods used for its Study by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Sīnā,* Seyyed Hossein Nasr.
IK	*al-Insān al-Kāmil,* 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, ed. M. Molé.
ILP	*Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras or Pythagoric Life,* Thomas Taylor.
IME	*Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians,* tr. Thomas Taylor.
ISQ	*Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah: An Appendix to Sharḥ-i Manāzīl al-Sārīn,* 'Abd al-Razzāq Qāshānī.
J1–10	*Josephus,* 10 vols., tr. H. St.J. Thackeray *et al.*
JA	*Joseph and Asenath,* E.W. Brooks.
JB	*The Jerusalem Bible* (1966). See *Acknowledgements.*
JCL	*The CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library (The Soncino Talmud, The Soncino Midrash Rabbah, The Soncino Zohar, The Bible);* Institute for Computers in Jewish Life & Davka Corporation.
JCW	*Josephus: His Complete Works,* tr. W. Whiston.
JDPW	*St Jerome: Dogmatic and Polemical Works,* J.N. Hritzu.
JM	*Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (German Translation).
JMM	*Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (Mandaean Text).
JW	*The Jewish War,* Josephus, tr. G.A. Williamson.
KA1–10	*Kashf al-Asrār va-'Uddat al-Abrār,* 10 vols., Abū al-Fażl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, ed. 'Alī Aṣghar Ḥikmat.
KB	*The Jerusalem Bible,* English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch; Koren Publishers. See *Acknowledgements.*
KBS	*Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh,* Faqīr Muḥammad.
KDS1–2	*Kullīyāt-i Dīvān-i Shams: Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mashhūr bi Maulavī,* 2 vols., B. Furūzānfar.
KFF	*Kitāb Fīhi mā Fīhi,* Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KG	*Kabīr Granthāvalī,* ed. Shyām Sundardās.
KI	*The Koran Interpreted,* 2 vols., tr. A.J. Arberry. See *Acknowledgements.*
KJV	*The Authorized Version of the Bible (The King James Bible)* [1611]. See *Acknowledgements.*
KM	*Kashf al-Mahjūb: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufiism,* 'Alī b. 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*

KMC1–4	"Der Kölner Mani-Codex" *(Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis)*, 4 parts, ed. A. Henrichs and L. Koenen.
KSA	*Akhrāvatī: Kabīr Sahab kā Pūrā Granth;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSB	*Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSD1–10	*Kullīyāt-i Shams yā Dīvān-i Kabīr (Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz)*, 10 vols., ed. B. Furūzānfar.
KSS	*Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah;* Belvedere Printing Works.
KSS1–4	*Kabīr Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī*, 4 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
KWGN	*Kabir: The Weaver of God's Name*, V.K.Sethi.
LB	*Legends of the Bible*, Louis Ginzberg, tr. from German, Henrietta Szold. See *Acknowledgements.*
LJCD	*Legends of the Jews* (CD-ROM), Louis Ginzberg. See *Acknowledgements.*
LOSM	*Light on Sant Mat*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
LSJ	*Light on Saint John*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
LSM	*Light on Saint Matthew*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
LSMH	"Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns", tr. Tsui Chi. See *Acknowledgements.*
MA	*The Master Answers*, Maharaj Charan Singh.
MAA	"The Mythological Acts of the Apostles", A.S. Lewis.
MAG	*Mishkāt al-Anwār*, al-Ghazālī.
MAR	*Mashrab al-Arwāḥ*, Shaykh Rūzbihān, ed. Khwājah Naẓīf Muḥarram.
MBB	*Ein Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch*, W.B. Henning.
MBS	*Mīrābāī kī Shabdāvalī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDB	*Malūkdās Jī kī Bānī;* Belvedere Printing Works.
MDI	*Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel.
MDL	*Mira: The Divine Lover*, V.K. Sethi.
MEM	"Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism", G. Widengren. See *Acknowledgements.*
MFM	"Maternal Perception and Doppler Detection of Fetal Movement", Timothy R. Johnson.
MGK	*The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, Marmaduke Pickthall.
MHCP	*The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian*, M. Boyce. See *Acknowledgements.*
MJR1–8	*The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, 8 vols., ed. & tr. with notes & commentary R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
ML	*Manichaean Literature*, J.P. Asmussen. See *Acknowledgements.*
MLRE	*Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire*, S.N.C. Lieu.
MM	*Mani and Manichaeism*, G. Widengren.
MM1–3	"Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan", 3 vols., F.C. Andreas and W.B. Henning.
MMC	*The Mysteries of Mithra*, Franz Cumont, tr. Thomas J. McCormack.

MMS	*Sri Guru Granth Sahib: English and Punjabi Translation*, 8 vols., tr. Manmohan Singh.
MOI	*The Mystics of Islam*, R.A. Nicholson.
MP	*Muhammads People: A Tale by Anthology: A Mosaic Translation*, Eric Schroeder.
MPB	*A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, ed. & tr. C.R.C. Allbery. See *Acknowledgements*.
MRG1–7	*Majmū'at Rasā'il (Collection of Letters)*, 7 vols., al-Ghazālī.
MSM	*Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from Tadhkirat al-Auliya'*, Farid al-Din Attar, tr. A.J. Arberry. See *Acknowledgements*.
MSS	*Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu;* Shrī Mīrā Prakāshan Samiti.
MTJM	*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Gershom G. Scholem.
NGL	*Nine Gates*, Jirí Langer, tr. Stephen Jolly.
NHL	*The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS11	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XI: *Nag Hammadi Codices V,2–5 and VI*, ed. Douglas M. Parrott. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS15	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XV: *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*, ed. Birger A. Pearson. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS20	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XX: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7*, vol. 1, ed. Bentley Layton. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS21	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXI: *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7*, vol. 2, ed. Bentley Layton. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS22	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXII: *Nag Hammadi Codex I (the Jung Codex)*, vol. 1, ed. Harold W. Attridge. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS26	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVI: *Nag Hammadi Codex III,5, The Dialogue of the Saviour*, ed. Stephen Emmel. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS28	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII: *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XII, XIII*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS30	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXX: *Nag Hammadi Codex VII, XIII*, ed. Birger A. Pearson. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS31	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXI: *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII*, ed. John H. Sieber. See *Acknowledgements*.
NHS33	*Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXIII: *Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1, III,1, and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, ed. M. Waldstein and Frederik Wisse. See *Acknowledgements*.
NIV	*The Holy Bible: New International Version*.
OCC	*Origen Contra Celsum*, Origen, tr. H. Chadwick.
OFP	*Origen on First Principles*, tr. G.W. Butterworth.
OLAG	*The Oxyrhynchus Logia and the Apocryphal Gospels*, C. Taylor.
OTP1–2	*The Old Testament Pseudoepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. J.H. Charlesworth. See *Acknowledgements*.

PA1–6	*Plotinus*, tr. A.H. Armstrong, 6 vols.
PB	*The Prayer Book: Weekday, Sabbath and Festival*, including *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)*, tr. Ben Zion Bokser. See *Acknowledgements.*
PCW1–10	*Philo*, 10 vols., tr. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker. See *Acknowledgements.*
PEC	*Plotinus (The Enneads)*, tr. Stephen MacKenna.
PES	*Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book I (Sects 1–46)*, tr. F. Williams. See *Acknowledgements.*
PF	*Psychology of the Future*, Stanislav Grof.
PM1–5	*Philosophy of the Masters*, 5 vols., Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh.
PMA	*The Persian Mystics: The Invocations of Sheikh 'Abdullāh Ansāri of Herat, A.D. 1005–1090*, Sir Jogendra Singh.
POM	*The Path of the Masters*, Julian Johnson.
PP1–10	*The Padma Purāṇa*, 10 vols., tr. Dr N.A. Deshpande. See *Acknowledgements.*
PS	*Pistis Sophia*, tr. Violet MacDermot.
PSB1–3	*Paltū Sāhib kī Bānī*, 3 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
PSGG	*Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel*, G.R.S. Mead.
PTC	*Plato: Timaeus and Critias*, tr. Desmond Lee.
PWJ	*The Principal Works of St Jerome*, tr. W.H. Fremantle *et al.*
QI	*Qānūn-i 'Ishq, ya'nī Ḥalwā-yi Punjāb har dū ḥissah (Sharḥ Kāfiyān Bābā Bulleh Shāh)*, Anwar 'Alī Ruhtakī.
RAH	*Refutation of All Heresies*, Hippolytus, tr. S.D.F. Salmond.
RCM	*Shrī Rām Charit Mānas*, Tulsīdās; Gītā Press.
REWA	*Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*, J. Head and S.L. Cranston.
RFT	*Reincarnation: A Study of Forgotten Truth*, E.D. Walker.
RHP	*Recueil des hadiths Prophétiques et des sagesses Mahométanes*, al-Sayed Ahmad al-Hachimi, tr. Fawzi Chaaban.
RIS	*Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad*, ed. & tr. Fażl Maḥmūd Asīrī.
RM	*Rābi'a the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islām*, Margaret Smith.
RMP	*A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, M. Boyce.
RNV1–4	*Rasā'il Shāh Ni'matullāhī Valī*, 4 vols., ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh.
ROH	*Remembering Our Home*, Sheila and Dennis Linn, William Emerson and Matthew Linn.
RR	*The Ring of Return*, E. Martin.
RSN	*Riyādh us-Ṣāliḥīn*, ed. Imām Abū Zakaria Yaḥya bin Sharaf an-Nawawi, tr. S.M. Madni 'Abbāsi.
RSV	*The Revised Standard Version* (1952).
SAA	*St Augustine: Against the Academics*, tr. J.J O'Meara.
SB	*Sar Bachan*, Soami Ji Maharaj (Swami Shiv Dayal Singh).
SBB	*Sahajobāī kī Bānī*; Belvedere Printing Works.
SBE	*Sultan Bahu*, J.R. Puri and K.S. Khak.

SBP	*Sār Bachan Chhand-Band (Sār Bachan Poetry),* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh.
SBPS	*Shrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇam with Shrīdharasvāmin's Commentary,* ed. J.L. Shāstrī.
SBS1–2	*Sant Bānī Sangrah,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
SBSU	*Sā'īn Bulleh Shāh;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu).
SBU	*Ḥaẓrat Sulṭān Bāhū;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu).
SCMP	*Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book,* T. Säve-Söderbergh.
SD1–2	*Spiritual Discourses,* 2 vols., Maharaj Charan Singh.
SDL	*Seneca: Dialogues and Letters,* tr. C.D.N. Costa.
SDMG	*A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece,* H.B. Long.
SDST	*Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz,* ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. See *Acknowledgements.*
SEC	*The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church,* ed. H.R. Percival.
SEM1–3	*Seneca: Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales,* 3 vols., tr. Richard M. Gummere.
SG	*Spiritual Gems,* Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji.
SGRV	*Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī,* ed. B.P. Sharmā.
SGT	*St Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works,* tr. Michael Slusser.
SHI	*The Spiritual Heritage of India,* Swami Prabhavananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
SKB	*Santon kī Bāṇī;* Radha Soami Satsang Beas.
SKD1–5	*Shabdakalpadruma,* 5 vols., Rājā Rādhākant Dev.
SKS	*Self-Knowledge (Atmabodha),* tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
SLO	*Spiritual Letters,* Baba Jaimal Singh Ji (1984 edn.).
SM1–4	*Sahih Muslim,* 4 vols., Imam Muslim, tr. 'Abdul Hamid Siddiqi.
SME1–3	*Seneca: Moral Essays,* 3 vols., tr. John W. Basore.
SMIK1–13	*The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan,* 13 vols., Hazrat Inayat Khan.
SN	*Saint Namdev,* J.R. Puri and V.K. Sethi.
SNG	*Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā;* Government of Maharashtra (Marathi).
SNP1–2	*Sant Nāmdev kī Hindi Padāvalī,* 2 vols., ed. Bhagirath Misra and Rājnarayan Maurya.
SOA	*Sufis of Andalusia: The* Rūḥ al-quds *and* al-Durrat al-fākhirah *of Ibn 'Arabi,* tr. R.W.J. Austin.
SOS	*Science of the Soul,* Sardar Bahadur Maharaj Jagat Singh.
SOU	*Signs of the Unseen: The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi,* tr. W.M. Thackston Jr.
SP	*The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux,* recorded & ed. Joseph Epes Brown. See *Acknowledgements.*

SPL	*The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rūmī,* William C. Chittick. See *Acknowledgements.*
SSE1–15	*Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology,* 15 vols., Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. Terry Graham *et al.* See *Acknowledgements.*
SSR	*Shrī Sant Rohidās,* Ashok Prabhākar Kāmat.
SSV	*Siva Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. See *Acknowledgements.*
STG	*Shrī Tukārām Bāvāñchyā Abhangāñchī Gāthā,* ed. Shrī P.M. Lāḍ.
TAI	*Tadhkirat al-Awliyā',* Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. Muḥammad Isti'lāmī.
TAN1–2	*Tadhkirat al-Awliyā',* Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. R.A. Nicholson.
TDB	*Tulsīdās Jī kī Bārahmāsī,* Shri Goswāmī Tulsīdās Jī.
TGH1–3	*Thrice-Greatest Hermes,* 3 vols., G.R.S. Mead.
TMT	*A Talmudic Miscellany: A Thousand and One Extracts from the Talmud, the Midrashim and the Kabbalah,* tr. Paul Isaac Hershon.
TPU	*Thirteen Principal Upanishads,* tr. R.E. Hume.
TS	*The Teachings of Silvanus,* J. Zandee.
TSH1–2	*Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī,* 2 vols.; Belvedere Printing Works.
TT1–2	*The Texts of Taoism,* 2 vols., tr. James Legge.
TTCT	*Tao Te Ching: A New Translation,* Ch'u Ta-Kao. See *Acknowledgements.*
U1–4	*The Upanishads,* 4 vols., tr. & commentary Swami Nikhilananda. See *Acknowledgements.*
UAQJ	*Utterances (Malfūẓāt) of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī,* tr. Muhtar Holland.
UWOT	*The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament Found in the Armenian mss. of the Library of St Lazarus,* tr. J. Issaverdens.
VE	*The Vedic Experience,* Raimundo Panikkar. See *Acknowledgements.*
VP	*The Vishṇu Purāṇa,* tr. H.H. Wilson.
VS	*Vivek Sāgar,* Dariyā Sāhib, Hindi ms., tr. in *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya.
VSY	*Vedāntasāra (The Essence of Vedānta) of Sadānanda Yogindra,* tr. Swāmī Nikhilānanda.
WCA1–2	*The Writings of Clement of Alexandria,* 2 vols., tr. W. Wilson.
WJMA	*The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras,* tr. M. Dods.
WL	*The Works of Lactantius,* ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson.
WMM	*The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic,* W.H.T. Gairdner.
WO1–2	*The Writings of Origen,* 2 vols., tr. F. Crombie.

WP	*The Wisdom of the Prophet (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam),* Muhyī-d-Din ibn 'Arabi, tr. (from Arabic to French) Titus Burckhardt, tr. (from French to English) Angela Culme-Seymour.
WTDA	*The Works of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius of Alexandria and Archelaus,* tr. S.D.F. Salmond.
WZ1–3	*The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts,* 3 vols., arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby. See *Acknowledgements.*
XSM	*Xuāstvānīft: Studies in Manichaeism,* Jes P. Asmussen.
ZBS	*The Zohar: The Book of Splendour,* selected & ed. Gershom G. Scholem.
ZM	*Zoroastrian Morals,* I.J.S. Taraporewala, contributed to *Encyclopedia of Morals,* ed. Vergilius Ferm.
ZSS1–5	*The Zohar,* 5 vols., tr. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon.

THE SOUL IN EXILE

6.1 Evil, the Devil and the Negative Power

No one can deny the existence of good and bad in this world. To a greater or lesser extent, it confronts everyone at every step – both within oneself as well as in the outside world. The origin of this interplay, however, is not so easy to determine. Most religions assert that God is the supreme Creator and controller of all things. Many teach that He is also a God of love and compassion. Consequently, there is a fundamental dichotomy in all attempts to explain God and the world in logically satisfying terms. For how can a loving, compassionate and merciful God, who appears to demand such a high standard of behaviour from His created souls, have created such things as evil and suffering?

Religion, theology, mysticism and philosophy have put forward many different myths, explanations, theories, opinions and dogmas to account for this paradox. But since, necessarily, these accounts have all been expressed in intellectual and conceptual terms, there is no external visible proof of any of them, and therefore none of them are entirely satisfying.

Most religions speak in terms of a devil, in one form or another, but the way in which this power is understood varies between and within the many religious and spiritual traditions. Common elements are present between them, however, and perhaps the broadest-based scenario has been put forward by a number of mystics, gnostics and mystical schools throughout the ages. This school of thought sees the good and bad of this world as two sides of the same coin. Some mystics have also added that this world, and a vast area of the heavenly realms as well, are under the administration of an *archon* (ruler) or 'super-devil' who has a divinely appointed role to keep all souls within his domain through the interplay of good and bad, happiness and suffering, bliss and misery. But since the truth or otherwise of this scenario can only be determined by mystical experience of the whole affair, for the majority of people, this too remains only another possibility.

In popular thought, the devil is the supreme spirit of evil, the rival or enemy of God and, therefore, in ordinary usage, the concept has an exclusively negative connotation. The 'super-devil', on the other hand, is a servant of God, even an exalted entity, and compared to man, is "full of light, goodness, wisdom and power".[1] Everything he does is by divine command, and ultimately has a divine and loving purpose; for it

is the discomfort of separation from God which finally drives the soul to seek union with Him. Intellectually, this is somehow a more satisfying idea than a devil who – to one extent or another – is forever outside the dominion of the Divine, with powers of his own, and acting as His eternal enemy.

The negative aspect of this power is that he is the origin of the mind, the body and the senses and through these agents, acting in the realm of duality, he keeps souls enmeshed in the lower realms of creation – the physical, astral and causal worlds. The law by which this 'super-devil' keeps souls in these lower realms is one of pure justice, of pure cause and effect. The souls themselves are thus responsible for their own suffering. Understood in this manner, this devil is clearly of a different character from the all-evil being of traditional religious conception.

Terms for this 'super-devil', for the devil as he is commonly understood, and also for lesser devils and demons are the subject of this section. Since terms such as Satan, *Shayṭān, Kāl,* the Demiurge and so on have a spread of meaning in their normal religious settings, it has been necessary to choose a neutral English term specifically for the 'super-devil'. Though not ideal, largely because it was first used only recently, during the early twentieth century, and is also unfamiliar to the majority of people, the term chosen for this purpose is the 'negative power'. This term does have the advantage of being largely free from the connotations of other possible contenders.

KEY ENTRIES: **devil**, **devils**, **Kāl**, **negative power**, **Satan**.

1. Julian Johnson, *The Path of the Masters, POM* p.260.

Abaddon (He) *Lit.* destruction; a name for the devil used in *Revelations*, the New Testament apocalypse with a pronounced Jewish character. *Abaddon* is "the angel of the bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, but in the Greek tongue hath his name *Apollyon*".[1]

In rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature, *Abaddon* is that part of *Gehinnom* (hell) in which unrepentant and wicked souls suffer, without hope of escape.

See also: **Gehenna** (4.1).

1. *Book of Revelation* 9:11, *KJV*.

Adversary (He. *Satan*) A person or group that is hostile; an enemy; a name commonly used in early Christian and gnostic literature for the devil. The term is used by Jesus, albeit obliquely, when he says:

> Agree with thine adversary quickly,
> whiles thou art in the way with him;
> Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
> and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
> and thou be cast into prison.
> Verily I say unto thee,
> thou shalt by no means come out thence,
> till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.
>
> *Matthew 5:25–26, KJV*

Here, the "adversary" is the devil, the prison is this world, while the "judge" and "officer" are general references to the intervening powers that govern rebirth and destiny. This is not a new interpretation. The second-century Church father, Irenaeus, writes of a gnostic group known to him as the Carpocratians who said that the "adversary" is the devil; the "judge" is the chief of the "world-building powers", that is, an agent of the negative power concerned with the administration of the physical universe; the "officer" is the power who oversees the formation of a new body; and the "prison" is the body itself. In this instance, the devil or Satan is thus perceived as the ruler of this world, and the teaching is credited to Jesus.[1] A similar interpretation is found in the gnostic text, the *Pistis Sophia.*[2]

Elsewhere in the early literature, the Adversary is explicitly equated with the devil. In the New Testament letter known as *1 Peter,* "your Adversary the devil" is said to be alive and awake everywhere, seeking victims:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the devil,
as a roaring lion, walketh about,
seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8, KJV

In the *Acts of John,* the apostle John describes his Master as he who is all-seeing, present everywhere and within everything, the shelterer of his devotees, who understands the "wiles and assaults" of the "Adversary", and who can help man against this devil. He addresses Jesus as the

only seer of all,
who exists in all and is present everywhere,
containing all things and filling all things:
Christ Jesu, God, Lord, who with your gifts
and your mercy shelters them that trust in you,
who knows clearly the wiles and assaults
of he that is everywhere our Adversary,
which he devises against us:
Do you only, O Lord, succour your servants by your visitation.

Acts of John 108; cf. ANT p.267

Equating the Adversary with the serpent of the garden of Eden, the fourth-century Syrian Church father, Ephraim Syrus, writes of the soul's fall from the spiritual realms:

From the Height of Eden the Adversary cast me down,
and into the abyss of the dead (this world)
he threw me down that he might deride me.
My beautiful garments
were swallowed up and do not exist.
I was confused and overthrown,
and hurled down into *Hadēs* (this world).
And behold I am made a nest of worms,
and moth and tapeworms gnaw at me.
My Saviour, your resurrection shall renew me.

Ephraim Syrus, ESHS4 629:2; cf. MEM p.59

In the *Trimorphic Protennoia,* written in the style of a revelation, the primal divine Thought, the *Protennoia,* the Creative Word, speaking as the Saviour, describes the "Adversary" as the origin of the soul's bondage to this world. The "Adversary", "Enemy" or "evil force" must be overcome before his chosen souls ("those who are mine") can return to their original home, "where they were at first":

Every bond I loosed from you,
  and the chains of the demons of the underworld, I broke –
  these things which are bound on my members, restraining them.
And the high walls of darkness, I overthrew;
And the secure gates of those pitiless ones, I broke;
And I smashed their bars.
And the evil force and the one who beats you,
  and the one who hinders you,
  and the Tyrant and the Adversary,
  and the one who is king, and the present Enemy,
  indeed all these I explained to those who are mine,
  who are the sons of the Light,
  in order that they might nullify them all,
  and be saved from all those bonds,
  and enter into the place where they were at first.

Trimorphic Protennoia 41:4–20, NHS28 pp.414–15

In the gnostic *Teachings of Silvanus,* the writer says that the return to God and to "Wisdom", the divine creative power, involves fighting against the "powers of the Adversary":

> But return, my son, to your first Father, God, and Wisdom your Mother, from whom you came into being in the very beginning, in order that you might fight against all of your enemies, the powers of the Adversary.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 91; cf. NHS30 pp.296–97*

This "Adversary", he continues, is equipped with a multitude of "tricks" with which to waylay the seeker:

> My son, do not swim in any water, and do not allow yourself to be defiled by strange kinds of knowledge. Do you not know that the schemes of the Adversary are not few, and that the tricks which he has are varied? Especially has the spiritual man been robbed of the intelligence of the snake. For it is fitting for you to be in agreement with the intelligence of (these) two: with the intelligence of the snake and with the innocence of the dove[3] – lest he (the Adversary) come into you in the guise of a flatterer, as a true friend, saying, "I advise good things for you."
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 94–95; cf. NHS30 pp.306–7, TS pp.32–35*

The *Authoritative Teaching* graphically describes the process by which this "Adversary" tempts and entices:

> In this very way we exist in this world, like fish. The Adversary spies on us, lying in wait for us like a fisherman, wishing to seize us, rejoicing that he might swallow us. For he places many foods before our eyes, (things) which belong to this world. He wishes to make us desire one of them and to taste only a little, so that he may seize us with his hidden poison and bring us out of freedom and take us into slavery. For whenever he catches us with a single food, it is indeed necessary for us to desire the rest. Finally, then, such things become the food of death....
>
> Now all such things the Adversary prepares beautifully and spreads out before the body, wishing to make the mind of the soul incline her toward one of them and overwhelm her, like a hook drawing her by force in ignorance, deceiving her until she conceives evil, and bears the fruit of matter, and conducts herself in uncleanness, pursuing many desires and greeds, while fleshly pleasure draws her in ignorance.
>
> *Authoritative Teaching 30–31; cf. NHS11 pp.276–79*

See also: **Enemy**, **Judge**, **Satan**.

1. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I:25.4, *AH1* pp.95–96.
2. *Pistis Sophia* 295:113; *cf. PS* pp.590–93.
3. *cf. Matthew* 10:16.

Ahriman (Pv/P) *Lit.* evil spirit; the devil; the spirit of darkness and evil, wickedness and death, in Zoroastrian texts written in the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) language; from the Avestan, *Angra Mainyu* (Evil Spirit).

By the time the Pahlavi texts came to be written, many centuries after Zarathushtra, *Ahriman* was regarded by the majority of Zoroastrians as a power separate from the true God *(Ohrmazd)* of goodness and light. Many myths and legends were also related of the battles fought between *Ahriman* and *Ohrmazd.* This dualist understanding, however, is not borne out by the extant writings of Zarathushtra. In fact, Zarathushtra specifically describes how both "good" and "bad" "spirits *(mainyu)*" were created by God *(Mazdā)* at "creation's early dawn":

> Now to eager listeners will I speak
> of the two *mainyu, Mazdā* did create....
> That you, grown perfect, may attain His Light....
>
> The first created were these *mainyu,* two:
> as twin co-workers they manifest themselves;

Yet in each thought and word and deed these two
forever disagree: one's good, the other's bad.
And of these two, the wise do choose aright,
while the unwise choose not thus – and go astray.

And when together these two *mainyu*
did foregather at creation's early dawn,
one made life *(gaya)*, the other, death *(ajyāitī)*;
And thus creation's purpose is achieved:
Darkness of mind for the followers of Untruth *(dregvānts)*,
brightness of mind for the followers of Truth *(ashāvants)*.
Of these two *mainyu*, the worldly man *(dregvānt)*
will always choose performing evil deeds,
while the spiritual man will choose the Truth.

He who would clothe himself in imperishable light,
He who would satisfy the Lord *Ahurā*:
Let him through deeds of Truth choose *Mazdā*'s Way.

Zarathushtra, Yasna 30:1, 3–5; cf. DSZ pp.127, 136, 140, 144

As a name for the devil, *Ahriman* came into common usage in Iran and, during the third century CE, the Iranian mystic, Mānī, used the term to refer to the devil or power that keeps souls imprisoned in this world and separate from God. One Manichaean text, for instance, speaks of the return of the soul to *Ohrmazd* (*Ahurā Mazdā*, the supreme Lord) after being "saved from *Ahriman*":

That (soul) of righteous men is happy
at being saved from *Ahriman*,
and coming to the existence belonging to *Ohrmazd;*
And he offers homage to the glory of *Ohrmazd*.

Dātastān-i Dēnīk 19:6, GVM p.58

In Mānī's teachings, this salvation includes liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In a parable from a fragmentary Parthian text purporting to record the actual words of Mānī himself, Mānī contrasts those souls who are on the path back to God with those who are still deeply attached to this world. Speaking of the latter, he says that *Ahriman* is the power that keeps souls in the "cycle of rebirths" and the "hell" of this world:

Those that must descend into the depth of this world are *Ahriman*'s slaves and prisoners, … and *Ahriman* is their ruthless ruler and cruel prince. Those souls that are his are those whom he harms. He seizes

> them, and he corrupts their beauty through attachment to the world, throwing them into the cruel cycle of rebirths and into hell.
>
> *Manichaean Parables, BMP 284ff.: cf. GSR pp.184–85*

Two fragments of another Parthian text relate parts of a Manichaean parable that illustrates the varying degrees of freedom, indebtedness or slavery of the souls in this world to this "Evildoer" or "evildoing prince of darkness". The means by which this negative power imprisons souls is also identified as their debt of sin.

The first fragment begins where the "Evildoer", at a certain "watchpost", is checking out the souls who pass his way. When some debtors reach this point,

> he seizes them and says, "First pay those debts which you owe in this realm. Then you may go wherever you wish."
>
> But those that are free, and have no debts in that realm, go confidently and fearlessly past the watchpost, and the Evildoer can do nothing to them. And in that realm where they have gone, where the Evildoer has no dominion, ... they rest forever in eternal peace and bliss.
>
> But those that are his slaves, they willy-nilly serve that lord. And when that evildoing prince of darkness realizes, "My slaves are trying to flee," they are fettered even more tightly with ropes around their limbs and chains about their bodies. And he leads them into the dark prison where they nevermore find a door or an escape.
>
> *Manichean Parables, BMP 289–91; cf. GSR p.185*

The explanation of this first fragment is lost, but the parable is explained in the second, seemingly in the words of Mānī himself, though the manuscript is deficient and its history is unknown:

> The watchpost where they are seized is the physical body of man. The free ones are those that hear the Word, believe, accept and truly keep my path. They do not give up following my instructions up to the day when they depart from the body. The realm to which they go, and where *Ahriman* has no power, is paradise. *Nirvāṇa* and peace prevail there, and not even one sinner is to be found.
>
> The slaves are those who [have no interest in the Word. They do not wish to follow this path. They fall victim to *Ahriman*, who tortures them, and does them harm, casting them once more into the realm of rebirth].
>
> The debtors are those who hear the true Word of the Beneficent One, and yearn for it. They are unable to completely overcome and uproot their own sin, but at the same time they do find pleasure in the true Word and spiritual practice (*lit.* righteous deed, spiritual

> action).... And among the debtors are some with many debts and some with few....
>
> *Manichean Parables, BMP 293–95; cf. GSR p.186*

The parable is alluding to the three main social groups in ancient Sassanian Iran. There were the nobles, originally exempt from taxation. Then there were the working people – craftsmen, farmers, merchants and so on – who paid tax. And lastly there were the slaves. The debt or tribute refers to the debt of *karma* which a soul accumulates while being in this world, and which can only be paid in this world. Those souls who have such debts cannot leave this world or get past the "watchpost".

The "watchpost", explains the text, is the physical body. At the time of death, the "free ones", those who have no further debts, are able to go free. *Ahriman*, the "evildoing Prince" has no further hold over them, and they go to "paradise", the land of "eternal peace and bliss", the place of *"nirvāṇa"*, which Mānī identifies elsewhere with eternity and the true home of the soul.

The "slaves" are those who are so indebted to *Ahriman* that there is no question of their being able to repay their debts. Masters actually teach that no soul is past redemption, so this may be an addition from the later Manichaean religion, or it may simply be a general way of speaking of those souls who are likely to spend a great many more lives incarnate in physical forms.

The "debtors" are the disciples of a Master who have been unable to completely eradicate "their own sin", but all the same do have some experience of the "true Word" and "spiritual practice". Moreover, not all debtors are indebted to the same degree. They all carry different loads of sin or *karma* from past lives.

The manuscript, as it exists today, finally fragments into nothing, but it seems clear that the "slaves" are those who have no interest in the path of the Creative Word, while the "debtors" and the "free ones" represent the spectrum of disciples who come to a Saviour. Different individuals respond differently to their initiation into the "true Word" because of a difference in the load of stored sins or *karma* they each carry from past lives, and which represents the extent of their indebtedness to *Ahriman*, the negative power.

As a term for the devil, *Ahriman* remained in general use in Persia. The Sufi mystic, Ḥāfiẓ (*c.*1326–1390), for example, many centuries later, advises breaking away from the "Enemy", *Ahriman*, by grasping the "garment of the Friend", the divine Beloved:

> Hold in your hand the garment of the Friend:
>   from the Enemy break free.
> Be a man of God, and pass safely by *Ahriman*.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.214, DHM (458:2) p.414, DIH p.346; cf. DHWC (457:8) p.763*

He also says that it is because of the "Great Name" (the creative Power) that he has no fear of *Ahriman:*

> When I possess the Great Name *(Ism-i A'ẓam),*
> what need I fear of *Ahriman?*
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.201, DHM (529:6) p.390, DIH p.327; cf. DHWC (435:11) p.726*

See also: **Akō Mainyu, Angra Mainyu, Enemy, slaves** (6.3).

Akō Mainyu (Av) *Lit.* Spirit *(Mainyu)* of Evil *(Akō);* a Zoroastrian epithet for the negative power or Spirit in creation; contrasted with *Spentā Mainyu* (Holy Spirit).

See also: **Ahriman, Angra Mainyu, Druj.**

Akō Manō (Av), **Akoman** (Pv) *Lit.* Evil *(Akō)* Mind *(Manō);* the negative mind, the negative power; contrasted with *Vohu Manō,* the Primal Mind, the divine Intelligence or Word of God. In his *Gāthās,* Zarathushtra identifies *Akō Manō* with the *Druj* (the Untruth, the Deceiver):

> But you, O *daevas* all, you go astray;
> Offspring of *Akō Manō* are you,
> and evil too are those that follow you;
> From the Deceiver *(Druj),* and from your self-centred minds,
> do all your double-dealing actions spring.
> Therefore, you are loathed and hated in this world.
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 32:3; cf. DSZ p.260*

The *daevas* are worldly minded leaders of one kind or another, who do not themselves know how to live, and are therefore responsible for leading others astray.

See also: **Ahriman, Druj.**

Angra Mainyu (Av) *Lit.* Evil *(Angra)* Spirit *(Mainyu);* the negative power or spirit in Zarathushtra's teachings; contrasted with the *Spentā Mainyu* (Holy Spirit); the origin of the Pahlavi and Persian name for the devil, *Ahriman.*

See also: **Ahriman, Akō Mainyu, Druj.**

Apollyon (Gk) *Lit.* destroyer; a name for the devil used in *Revelations*, the New Testament apocalypse with a pronounced Jewish character. *Apollyon* is "the angel of the bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, but in the Greek tongue hath his name *Apollyon*".[1]

See also: **Abaddon**.

1. *Book of Revelation* 9:11, *KJV*.

'Azaz'el (He), **'Azāzīl** (A/P) A demon, first appearing in *Leviticus* in connection with a complex ritual goat sacrifice, which became the origin of the Jewish religious festival of *Yom Kippur* (*lit.* Day of Atonement). According to ancient Hebrew and Canaanite belief, *'Azaz'el* lived in the desert or wilderness, which was regarded as devoid of God's life-giving energy. In *Leviticus*, *Yahweh* gives detailed instructions to Moses on how his brother Aaron should enter the sanctuary in order to atone for his sin and avoid death:

> He is to receive two goats for a sacrifice for sin and a ram for a holocaust (burnt offering) from the community of the sons of Israel. After offering the bull as a sacrifice for his own sin, and performing the rite of atonement for himself and his family, Aaron must take the two goats and set them before *Yahweh* at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
>
> He is to draw lots for the two goats, and allot one to *Yahweh* and the other to *'Azaz'el*. Aaron is to offer up the goat whose lot was marked 'For *Yahweh*', and offer it as a sacrifice for sin. The goat whose lot was marked 'For *'Azaz'el*' shall be set before *Yahweh*, still alive, to perform the rite of atonement over it, sending it out into the desert to *'Azaz'el*.
>
> *Leviticus 16:5–10, JB*

The idea is that one of the goats should be offered as "a sacrifice for sin", and the other should be sent into the desert, "to *'Azaz'el*", as an atonement, burdened with the sins of Israel:

> And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.
>
> *Leviticus 16:21–22, KJV*

According to Jewish tradition, this goat is later killed by throwing it over a cliff.

Historically, there has been some confusion over the meaning of *'Azaz'el*. William Tyndale, the sixteenth-century Bible translator, coined the word 'scapegoat' to translate *'azāzel*, mistakenly taking the word to mean 'a goat *(ayz)* that escapes *(azal)*', since *'azāzel* may indeed be derived from the Hebrew word for a goat. Tyndale's translation, which subsequently appeared in the *Authorized King James Version*, is the origin of the word 'scapegoat', which came to mean one who bears the blame of others. The *King James Version* reads:

> But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat *('azāzel)*, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat *('azāzel)* into the wilderness.
>
> *Leviticus 16:5–10, KJV*

It has also been suggested that *'Azaz'el* is the name of the cliff from which the goat is hurled, or of the desert place to which it is sent. The *Talmud* suggests that the name is derived from *'az* (firm, rough) and *el* (strong). An alternative suggestion is that the name comes from *'azalzel* (he removed), meaning 'complete removal' of sin (atonement). The ritual probably originated in ancient Babylonian or Akkadian practices which influenced the formation of early Israelite rituals.

The correct translation is probably as the name of a demon because *'Azaz'el* appears in later Jewish texts as a wicked angel. In the *Apocalypse of Adam*, for example, he is a fallen angel. His most significant role, however, is in *1 Enoch*, where he is the leader of a company of angels who desire the daughters of men. He is also the angel who teaches wickedness to human beings, further instructing them how to manufacture instruments of war and ornaments. Later in the story, as punishment for his actions, the angel *Rapha'el* is commanded by God to:

> Bind *'Azaz'el* hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness. And make an opening in the desert, which is in Duda'el, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there forever, and cover his face that he may not see light. And on the Day of the great Judgment he shall be cast into the fire.
>
> *1 Enoch 10:4–6, BE p.37*

Many Jewish legends have passed into Islamic mythology, often in a changed form and, like a number of other Jewish angels, *'Azaz'el* (as *'Azāzīl*) appears in Islamic and Sufi tradition. According to one account, *'Azāzīl* was

the angel who was most exemplary in his devotion to God but, when he refused to obey God's command and bow down before Adam (*i.e.* man), he was punished for his disobedience. He was expelled from paradise; his name was changed to *Iblīs;* and he was given the task of tempting and waylaying any human being who would listen to him. However, although this legend is prevalent in Muslim and Sufi literature, the idea of fallen angels is not acceptable in orthodox Islamic theology.

See also: **Iblīs**.

Beelzebub (He. *Ba'al-zebub*) *Lit.* lord *(ba'al)* of the flies *(zebub);* an anglicization of the Hebrew, *Ba'al-zebub;* the Phoenician god at Ekron, the sun god of the Philistines, a local name of the major deity, *Ba'al,* consulted by King Aḥaziah, according to *2 Kings.*[1] The Hebrew, *Ba'al-zebub* (lord of the flies) is probably a derogatory corruption of the original Ugaritic, *Ba'al-zebul,* which means 'lord *Ba'al*' or possibly 'master of the heavenly house'. *Ba'al* is a common Semitic word meaning owner, lord, master or husband.

During Graeco-Roman times, Beelzebul and Beelzebub came to be used for the prince or leader of the devils or demons opposed to God, presumably because the Philistines had been the enemies of the Israelites. Setting the God or gods or opponents in a derogatory light was common in ancient times. Thus, although Beelzebul does not appear in any extant Jewish literature, in the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke,[2] Beelzebul is understood by both Jesus and his antagonists to be the prince of the devils. Hence, the observation attributed to Jesus:

> A disciple is not above his Master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household?
>
> *Matthew 10:24–25; cf. KJV, RSV*

Likewise, in Mark's gospel, from which the similar accounts in Matthew and Luke were taken, Jesus is accused of casting out demons by being in league with the "prince of the demons":

> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the prince of the demons he casts out demons."
>
> *Mark 3:22; cf. KJV, RSV*

From his response, "How can Satan cast out Satan?",[3] it is clear that Jesus identifies Beelzebul with Satan, and on the basis of these passages, later

Christian commentators did the same. A number of early gospel translations, such as the *King James Version,* following the text of *2 Kings*, render Beelzebul as Beelzebub.

Beelzebub also appears in later Western literature. In Milton's *Paradise Lost,*[4] he is cast as a fallen angel, second to Satan in power. And in Marlowe's *Faustus,* Lucifer refers to Beelzebub as, "my companion – prince in hell".[5]

See also: **prince of this world**, **strong man**.

1. *2 Kings* 1:2–18.
2. *Mark* 3:22; *Matthew* 10:25, 12:24,27; *Luke* 11:15–19.
3. *Mark* 3:23, *KJV.*
4. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* 1:79, 2:99.
5. Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus* II:2.

Belial, Beliar Judaic names for Satan. The name appears once in *Deuteronomy* and throughout the historical books of the Bible, especially in *1* and *2 Samuel,* in such expressions as the "children of *Belial*",[1] "sons of *Belial*",[2] "men of *Belial*",[3] a "man of *Belial*"[4] or a "daughter of *Belial*".[5] Such expressions always refer to those who worship idols or other gods, or who – according to the writer – have behaved in a reprehensible manner; hence, the implied meaning, 'children of worthlessness' or 'worthless people'.

The derivation of *Belial* is uncertain, and there have been various suggestions, some more fanciful than others. The *Talmud* derives *Belial* from *beli-ya'al* (without a yoke):

> The children of *Belial* denotes children who have thrown off the yoke of heaven from their necks.
>
> *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 111b, JCL*

Other commentators have suggested that the name comes from *beli-ya'al* (without ascending), meaning those who will never ascend to heaven from *Sheol* (the Pit). It has also been suggested that *Beliar* may be a Jewish wordplay on *Belial,* as *beli or* (without light).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, probably dating from the second and third centuries BCE, *Belial* is the common name for Satan, where he is also called the "prince of darkness" and the "king of evil",[6] and is further identified with the serpent in the biblical story of the garden of Eden.[7] Echoing biblical usage, those deemed to be following the wrong path are dubbed the "sons of *Belial*" and so on. The allied *Damascus Document* also describes the "three nets of *Belial*", these being "fornication", "riches" and "pollution of

the Temple".[8] Probably the most mystical of the documents among Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Thanksgiving Hymns*, also speaks of *Belial* as the source, not only of wickedness, but also of teachings that lead people away from God. Those who give such teachings, says the writer, are "an assembly of deceit, and a horde of *Belial*".[9] They are a party to "*Belial*'s designs" because they do not "give ear to Thy Word":

> And they, teachers of lies and seers of falsehood,
> have schemed against me a devilish scheme,
> to exchange the Law engraved on my heart by Thee
> for the smooth things (which they speak) to Thy people.
> And they withhold from the thirsty
> the drink of (mystic) knowledge;
> And assuage their thirst with vinegar,
> that they may gaze on their straying,
> on their folly concerning their feast days,
> on their fall into their snares.
>
> But Thou, O God,
> dost despise all *Belial*'s designs;
> It is Thy purpose that shall be done,
> and the design of Thy heart
> that shall be established for ever.
>
> As for them, they dissemble,
> they plan devilish schemes.
> They seek Thee with a double heart,
> and are not confirmed in Thy truth.
> A root bearing poisoned and bitter fruit
> is in their designs;
> They walk in stubbornness of heart,
> and seek Thee among idols;
> And they set before them
> the stumbling block of their sin.
> They come to inquire of Thee
> from the mouth of lying prophets deceived by error,
> who speak [with strange] lips to Thy people,
> and an alien tongue,
> that they may cunningly turn
> all their works to folly.
>
> For [they hearken] not [to] Thy [Voice],
> nor do they give ear to Thy Word;

> Of the vision of (divine) knowledge, they say, "It is unsure,"
> and of the Way of Thy heart, "It is not (the Way)."
>
> *Thanksgiving Hymns XII:10–20 (12); cf. CDSS pp.263–64*

In the Jewish revelational text, the *Testament of Levi,* from a similar period to the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Beliar* is similarly portrayed as the "spirit of Error".[10] He is the author of all spiritual darkness, as contrasted with the Lord who is the source of spiritual light:

> And now, my children, you have heard everything. Choose for yourselves light or darkness, the law of the Lord or the works of *Beliar.*
>
> *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Levi) 19:1, OTP1 p.795*

The *Testament of Reuben* speaks especially of sexual misconduct as a weapon of *Beliar:*

> Promiscuity has destroyed many. Whether a man is old, well born, rich or poor, he brings on himself disgrace among mankind, and provides *Beliar* with an opportunity to cause him to stumble.... If promiscuity does not triumph over your reason, then neither can *Beliar* conquer you.
>
> *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Reuben) 4:7–8, 11, OTP1 pp.783–84*

And the *Testament of Dan* highlights anger:

> Anger and falsehood together are a double-edged evil, and work together to perturb reason. And when the soul is continually perturbed, the Lord withdraws from it, and *Beliar* rules it.
>
> *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Dan) 4:7; cf. OTP1 p.809*

In keeping with the apocalyptic tradition of both Judaism and later Christianity, it is also said that *Beliar* will lead many into apostasy during the last days, but will ultimately suffer defeat at the hands of God's angels.

In the New Testament, *Belial* receives only one mention when Paul speaks of *Belial* as Satan in *2 Corinthians.*[11] *Beliar* also appears in revelational texts such as the *Sibylline Oracles*[12] and the *Ascension of Isaiah.* In the latter – probably a Christian overwriting of an earlier Jewish revelation – *Beliar* is described as the "great prince, ... the king of this world, who has had dominion over it since it first came into being", and dwelling "in the vault of heaven". In a traditional apocalyptic prophecy, it is said that *Beliar* will come at the end of the world as a great king, able to perform miracles, and posing as the "Beloved", the "Lord" (Jesus), leading many astray. In the end, however, his imposture will be revealed by the coming of Jesus,

and "He will take *Beliar* and his hosts away to Gehenna." And of those who had been led astray, "The Beloved will send fire among them, and it will burn up all the ungodly, and they will be as though they had never been created."[13]

See also: **Satan**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 13:13; *Judges* 20:13; *2 Chronicles* 13:7; *1 Samuel* 10:27.
2. *Judges* 19:22; *1 Kings* 21:10, 13; *1 Samuel* 2:12, 25:17; *2 Samuel* 23:6.
3. *1 Samuel* 30:22.
4. *1 Samuel* 25:25; *2 Samuel* 16:7, 20:1.
5. *1 Samuel* 1:16.
6. *e.g. Testament of Amram (4Q543:545–48)* B:2.3, *DSSU* pp.154, 156.
7. *e.g. Beatitudes (4Q525)* 5:5.2, *DSSU* pp.174, 176.
8. *Damascus Document* I:6.11.
9. *Thanksgiving Hymns* X:20 (7); *cf. CDSS* p.257.
10. *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Judah)* 25:3, *OTP1* p.802.
11. *2 Corinthians* 6:15.
12. *Sibylline Oracles* 2:167, 3:63, *OTP1* pp.349, 363.
13. *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:2–3, 14, 18, *AOT* pp.791–93, *OTP2* pp.161–62.

Brahman (S), **Brahm(a)** (S/H/Pu) See **Brahman** (2.1).

Chitragupt(a) (S/H) **Chitargupat** (Pu) The record keeper of *Yama* or *Kāl,* the Hindu lord of death; the recording angel; the chief of the fourteen *yamadūtas* (messengers of death). According to Hindu mythology, *Chitragupta* is said to have been born from the body of *Brahmā* while the latter was engaged in meditation. *Brahmā* revealed to him all the subtle and hidden knowledge, permitting him to share in the offerings made to *Brahmā* at fire sacrifices. To begin with, *Chitragupta* was the scribe of the gods, but later became record keeper for *Yama.* Recording man's good and evil deeds in his great register *(Agra-Sandhānī), Chitragupta* reads the account when souls are brought before *Yama* for judgment after death.

Chitra means a picture, an image, a record or an impression. The word is derived from *chit,* which refers to that part of the mind which retains a record of all deeds and thoughts. *Gupta* means secret or hidden. The name may thus be understood as 'hidden record', and is perhaps a reference to the mental record of all thoughts and deeds – good or bad – which are impressed automatically upon the mind during the course of life. According to the *Mahābhārata:*

> *Chitragupta* is a minister of *Kāl* (lord of death). His duty, upon men's death, is to examine the account of the good and evil actions which they have performed while living.
>
> *Mahābhārata, Anushāsanaparvan 130*

Observing man rushing headlong through life, piling up a huge debt of *karma,* and heading directly for an increase in his misery, mystics attempt to pull him up in his tracks by portraying his end in earthly terms. The eighteenth-century Indian mystic, Dariyā Sāhib, following the traditional accounts of Indian mythology, paints a graphic picture of man's plight at death, when – however rich, influential or famous he may have been – he is faced with the consequences of his thoughts and deeds in life. He is taken to the "court of *Yam*" and "to the place of *Chitragupta*":

Make haste, lose no time!
The summons from the court of *Yam* has come.
(Now is the time) to present your account,
  and to show what you have accomplished,
  and what you have not.

O foolish one, you have been vain and conceited,
  but now you must explain what you have consumed,
  what spent and what deposited.
You cannot escape this time;
You will be severely beaten,
  and whips will fall upon your body.

You make your entreaty to the messengers of *Yam:*
"Kindly heed my prayer and save me,
  O messengers of *Yam.*
I shall be of some service to you,
  and shall immediately engage myself in devotion."

On hearing this, the messengers of *Yam* become furious,
  and give you a severe beating with their fists.
Moving with all speed,
  they hurry you to the place of *Chitragupta.*

Your palaces, horses and treasures are left behind,
  you cannot even turn your head to look at them again.
Your wife weeps and wails, beating her head,
  and a great multitude of servants mourn your death.

Whatever you have earned in the world and by whatever means,
  and however fabulous is the collection of your wealth,
  your claim in the world is all over:
Says Dariyā, without devotion to the Lord,
  you are no more than a slave of *Yam*.

Dariyā Sāhib, Shabd, DG1 pp.153–54; cf. DSSB pp.363–64

Mystics who have taught the path of the Creative Word have also said that it is through the help of such a mystic that this account can be torn up or rendered void:

God's slaves, who recite the Lord's *Gurbāṇī* (*Hari Bachan*, God's Word),
  they are dear to God.
The writ, which is written by *Chitargupat*,
  is erased and the balance of account
  with the death couriers (*Jam*, the lord of death) is all settled.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 668, MMS

The account paper of *Chitargupat* is torn up,
  and the *jamdūtān* (messengers of death) become helpless.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 79, MMS

See also: **Yama**.

corrupt bridegroom Metaphorically, the negative power; used in the early Christian *Odes of Solomon*, where it is contrasted with the divine Bridegroom – the Lord or Saviour.

Just as the devoted and mystic soul is said to be wedded as a bride to the divine Bridegroom, so is the "bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted" wedded to "Error", the power of illusion, the beguiling web of phantasm and change by which the negative power casts his spell over the souls within his domain.

The poet describes being taken up by "Light of Truth" – the Word. On the way, he is shown the negative power (the "Corrupter of all that is corrupt", the "Deceiver") and his consort "Error":

I went up into the Light of Truth,
  as if into a chariot;
And Truth took me,
  and led me;
And carried me across hollows and gulfs,
  and saved me from cliffs and floods;

And became for me a haven of salvation,
  and established me in the arms of deathless life.

And he was with me and gave me rest,
  and did not let me err,
  because he was and is the Truth.
And I ran no risk, because I walked with him (Truth),
  and I erred in nothing, because I obeyed him.
For Error fled from him,
  and could never meet him;
(Since Error runs a crooked race),
  but Truth travels a straight path.

And whatever failed my comprehension,
  he (Truth) made clear to me –
Even all the drugs of Error
  and the attractions that lead to death,
  which are considered to be sweetness.

And I saw the Corrupter of all that is corrupt,
  even the bridegroom who corrupts and is corrupted,
  while the bride who corrupts was adorning herself.
And I asked Truth, "Who are these?"

And he said to me,
"This is the Deceiver and (she is) Error,
  and they imitate the Beloved and His bride.
And they lead the world astray,
  and corrupt it.
They invite many to a banquet,
  and give them to drink of their intoxicating wine.
And they cause them to vomit up their wisdom
  and their understanding, rendering them witless.
And then they abandon them,
  and they (the drunken ones) go about corrupted,
  and like madmen.
For they have lost all understanding,
  neither do they seek it."

But I was made wise,
  so as not to fall into the hands of the Deceiver.
And I was glad,
  that Truth travelled with me:

> For I was made strong,
> and lived, and was saved.
> *Odes of Solomon 38:1–16*

See also: **Bridegroom** (▸2), **māyā** (6.2).

Cosmocrator (Gk. *Cosmocratos*) *Lit.* ruler of the cosmos, ruler of the world; the creator of the lower realms of creation, as in the gnostic revelation, the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth,* where, in accordance with gnostic belief, this power is portrayed as being unaware that he is not the highest Lord:

> And then a voice – of the Cosmocrator – came to the angels: "I am God and there is no other beside me." But I (Jesus) laughed heartily when I observed his conceit.
> *Second Treatise of the Great Seth 53; cf. NHS30 pp.158–61*

Irenaeus (c.120–202 CE), Bishop of Lyons, who wrote an extensive, scathing and generally biased polemic against the gnostics, says that the gnostics of the Valentinian school equated the Cosmocrator with the devil who, they said, was the creation of the Demiurge – the creator of the lower realms of creation. In this sense, the Cosmocrator is a lower ruler than the Demiurge, being the creator and ruler of this world only. Speaking of "the devil, whom they also call the Cosmocrator", Irenaeus adds:

> They represent the Demiurge as being the son of that mother of theirs *(Achamoth),* and the Cosmocrator as the creation of the Demiurge. The Cosmocrator has knowledge of what is above himself, because he is a spirit of wickedness; but the Demiurge is ignorant of such things.... Their mother dwells in that place which is above the heavens, that is, in the intermediate abode; the Demiurge in the heavenly place ...; but the Cosmocrator in this our world.
> *Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1:5.4; cf. AH1 p.23*

Here, the "mother", *Achamoth,* is the gnostic *Sophia* (Wisdom), who leaves the divine Source of all to make the creation below, but gets lost and trapped in the process. It is through the descent of *Sophia* that the Demiurge and the Cosmocrator come into being. Also, the Demiurge of Irenaeus' account would seem to be equivalent to the Cosmocrator of the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth.* This is not unusual, since different gnostic schools and writers commonly used particular names for different aspects of the creation, as they described it.

See also: **Demiurge, Saklas, Sama'el, Yaldabaoth.**

daemon(s) A specific case of a demon, especially a demigod; the guardian spirit of a place or person; an attendant or ministering spirit.

See also: **devils.**

Demiurge (Gk. *Demiourgos*) *Lit.* one who works for the people; from the Greek *demos* (people) and *ergon* (work); hence, artisan, craftsman, workman, artificer, architect; also, a magistrate with varying powers in ancient Greece; esoterically, creator, possessing a wide spread of meaning in Greek mystical and philosophical literature, especially Platonic, gnostic, Neo-Platonist and Hermetic. Sometimes it refers to the supreme Creator, sometimes to the creator of this world and other regions above it, and sometimes to the *Logos* – since all are creators in their own spheres.

Plato uses the term in the *Timaeus* for the creator of this world. In Plato's scheme of things, there exists a world of eternal realities which he calls 'ideas' or 'forms', entirely separate from the sensory world. These 'forms' constitute a kind of essential blueprint of which this world is the expression, and which can only be apprehended by the intuition of the pure *nous* (intelligence), the higher part of man. These 'forms' being unchanging are the only objects of true knowledge, no real knowledge being possible of the objects of the sensible world since they are ever changing. These 'forms' are contained in and caused by a supreme Reality, the Good, which is both a 'form' and more than a 'form'. All 'forms' derive their being from the Good. They make a harmonious hierarchical structure, and the individual *nous* can ascend through the hierarchy of forms until it reaches this ultimate, transcendent Reality. This Reality is akin to what is generally meant by God, but It is not the God who creates. Like the Vedantic *Brahman,* It is the motionless principle of absolute perfection, of Unity at rest.

The world, being sensible, cannot be eternal, and must have been created. This task of creation, Plato suggests in *Timaeus,* is performed by a coeternal principle, a creator-god, the Craftsman or Artificer. He is called the *Demiourgos* (Demiurge) and by other similar names, including *Synistas* (one who puts things together), *Apeirgasmenos* (one who divides and combines, hence fashions), *Tektainomenos* (begetter, craftsman) and *Gennesēs* (begetter, creator). This account of creation, Plato puts in the mouth, not of his Master, Socratēs, but of *Timaeus,* an astronomer, and is expressed as a possibility, not as a certainty.

The Demiurge, being good and without jealousy, sought to make the world as like himself and as free from blemish as possible. "Finding the visible

world to be, not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder, he brought order." But this Craftsman required a pattern on which to model the created world, and he fashioned the universe on a pattern which he contemplated in the eternal and spiritual world of 'forms':

> Whenever the maker *(demiourgos)* of anything has his eye on the eternally unchanging, and uses it as his pattern for the form and nature of his product, the result must necessarily be fair and perfect. But when he looks to the created only, using a created pattern, the result is not fair or perfect.
>
> Was the world, then – call it that or cosmos or by any other appropriate name – ... always in existence and without beginning, or was it created, having some beginning? "Created," I reply, for it is visible, tangible and corporeal, and therefore perceptible to the senses.... Now that which is created must, as we said, of necessity be created by a cause.... So let us return to our question, "Which pattern did the Artificer *(Tektainomenos)* have in view when he made the world – the pattern of the unchangeable or that of the created?" ... Clearly, he had his eye on the eternal, for the world is the fairest of creations, and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world ... must, therefore, of necessity, ... be a copy of something....
>
> Let me tell you, then, why the Framer *(Synistas)* of this world framed it at all. He was good, and what is good can never have any particle of envy in it. Being free from envy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as possible. This is as valid a principle for the origin of the world as we are likely to discover from the wisdom of men, and we would do well to accept it. Therefore, God (*i.e.* the Demiurge), desiring that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable, and finding the visible world to be, not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order, judging that this was in every way better than the other.
>
> *Plato, Timaeus 28–30; cf. DP3 pp.640–41, PTC pp.40–42*

Plato, through his character Timaeus, then goes on to say that nothing can be "fair" if it does not possess "intelligence *(nous)*", and intelligence cannot be present in anything devoid of soul:

> For which reason, when he (the Creator) was framing the universe, he put intelligence *(nous)* in soul *(psychē)*, and soul in body.... And so the most likely account must say, in very truth, that the world became a living creature, endowed with soul and intelligence *(nous)* by the providence of God.
>
> *Plato, Timaeus 30; cf. DP3 p.641, PTC pp.42–43*

In this context, intelligence or *nous* refers to the higher wisdom, the essential Spirit, of God.

It is clear from this description that the Demiurge is not omnipotent. He is limited not only by the pattern – that part of the world of 'forms' which contains the exemplars of everything and serves as the model which he copies – but also by his material. This material is the changeable, irrational element in the cosmos, in disorderly motion. It is also pre-existing; the Demiurge does not create it, but arranges it to bring order out of disorder. This permanent, irrational element, which is termed Necessity, is not wholly transformed, never completely mastered. It is only 'persuaded' by the Demiurge to direct most things for the good. The struggle of the lower element against the rule of reason is not without some limited success. To this element can be traced the imperfections in the visible universe. It is the best possible universe, but not a perfect one.

Time and eternity are metaphysical conundrums with which many philosophers have grappled. Plato was no exception, and a striking passage in the *Timaeus* describes the creation of time by the Demiurge as a "moving image of eternity", following after the creation of the universe in the image of the eternal reality of the world of 'forms':

> When the Father saw that the world which he had created as an image of the eternal gods was moving and living, he was glad, and in his joy he determined to make the copy still more like the original; and, as this was eternal, he sought to make the universe eternal, so far as possible. Now the nature of the Ideal Being was eternal, and to bestow this attribute fully upon the created world was impossible. So he resolved to make a moving image of eternity; and when he had ordered the heavens, he made an eternal moving image of that eternity which rests in unity; and this image, we call time, having a uniform and numerically determined motion.
>
> *Plato, Timaeus 37; cf. DP3 p.643, PTC p.51*

Time and the heavens were thus created together, and the seven 'planets' (the five known planets, plus the sun and moon) were put in place, as Plato goes on to say, to "preserve the numbers of time".

According to Plato's extensive description, the Demiurge also created lesser gods, entrusting them with the task of fashioning the bodies of man and the lower creatures, retaining for himself the task of fashioning the immortal principle of the soul:

> Now, when all the gods had come into being, both those who show themselves in the circuits we see in the sky as well as those who are of a more retiring nature, the Creator *(Gennesēs)* of all addressed

them in these words: "Ye gods, children of gods, who are my creations, and of whom I am the Artificer *(Demiourgos)* and Father, and who are indissoluble without my will – anything bonded can be dissolved, though only an evil being would wish to dissolve that which is harmonious and happy. Therefore, since you are created, you are not altogether immortal and indissoluble, but you shall certainly not be dissolved, nor be liable to death, having in my will a greater and mightier bond than those with which you were bound at your birth. Listen, therefore, to what I have to say:

"Three kinds of mortal creatures remain to be created; without them, the universe will be incomplete, for it will not contain every kind of creature which it ought to contain if it is to be perfect. However, if they were created and given life by me, they would be equal to the gods. In order, then, that they may be mortal, and that the whole may be truly whole, turn your hands, as is your nature, to the creation of living things, in the same manner which was shown by me in creating you.

"And that part of them worthy to be named immortal – that which is called divine and which will guide those among them who are ready to follow you, and what is right – I will begin by sowing the seed of that myself, and will then hand over the work to you. And you shall then interweave the mortal with the immortal, and make living creatures, and give them food, and make them grow, and receive them again at death."

Plato, Timaeus 41; cf. DP3 pp.645–46, PTC p.57

Plato's description is more that of a speculative philosopher than a mystic. But he was only one of many who used the term, other groups and individuals speaking of the Demiurge in a variety of ways, according to their own understanding of how the universe came into being. The first-century Philo Judaeus, Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, for example, speaks of the Demiurge as God the Father of the universe, while Wisdom, its "Mother", is the creative Power:

We should … be quite correct in saying without further question that the Demiurge who made this universe, is also, at the same time, the Father of what has been brought into existence; while its Mother is the Wisdom of He who made it.

Philo Judaeus, On Drunkenness 8; cf. PCW3 pp.332–33, TGH1 p.224

The early Church father, Lactantius, writing of the mystic Son of God and identifying him with the pre-existent Wisdom described in *Proverbs,*[1] says that the Hermetic texts call this *Logos* or mystic Son, the Demiurge:

> On this account, Trismegistus also called Him the "Demiurge *(Demiourgos)* of God".
>
> *Lactantius, Divine Institutes IV:6.9; cf. TGH3 p.241, WL p.222*

To the gnostics of early Christian times, the Demiurge was undoubtedly the subsidiary creator of this world. The Christian writer, Hippolytus (*fl.*210–236), Bishop of Rome, commenting on a Naassene gnostic text, says that the Naassenes believed that souls

> have been conveyed down here into a creation of clay (the body) that they may serve the Demiurge of this creation, *Yaldabaoth*, a fiery god.... For so they call the Demiurge and father of the world of forms.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies V:2; cf. RAH p.136*

The allusion to the Demiurge as "*Yaldabaoth*, a fiery God" refers to the Hermetic imagery of the Demiurge as the creator of this world. Just as the sun provides planet earth with the energy to sustain life, so too does the Demiurge, as the subsidiary creator, appear to be the creator of all life in this world.

Hippolytus also credits another gnostic group, the *Peratae*, with understanding the "devil" of Jesus' dialogue with the Jews in John's gospel to be this same Demiurge:

> When, however, (Jesus) remarks, "Your father is a murderer from the beginning,"[2] he alludes (say the *Peratae*) to the ruler and Demiurge of matter, who ... from the beginning was a murderer, for his work causes corruption and death.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies V:12, RAH p.169*

In keeping with gnostic belief, Hippolytus says that the gnostics following Valentinus believed that the Demiurge, though receiving energy and life from *Sophia* (Wisdom), is actually unaware of any power greater than himself:

> The Demiurge, they say, knows nothing at all, but is, according to them, devoid of understanding, and silly, and is not conscious of what he is doing or working at. But in him, while thus in a state of ignorance ... *Sophia* (Wisdom) wrought all sorts of energy, and infused vigour (into him). And (although *Sophia*) was really the operating cause, he himself imagines that he evolves the creation of the world out of himself: whence he commenced, saying, "I am God, and beside me there is no other."[3]
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VI:28, RAH pp.233–34*

Hippolytus also says that, according to the Valentinians, the creation made by this Demiurge is liable to dissolution.[4]

See also: **Cosmocrator**, **devil**, **Discord**, **Nous** (3.1), **Satan**, **Yaldabaoth**.

1. *Proverbs* 8:22.
2. *John* 8:44.
3. *cf. Deuteronomy* 4:35; *Isaiah* 45:5, 14, 18, 21–22.
4. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI:49, *RAH* p.263.

demoniac One said to be possessed by a demon or devil.

See **devils**.

demon king The devil; an expression used by the unknown writer of the Manichaean Chinese manuscripts found in Chinese Turkestan. In this hymn, the writer is praying to "Jesus *Buddha*" for liberation from birth and death:

> The demon king has scattered me
> in the ten directions, tempting me to take forms
> and be sullied by the three modes of existence,
> causing me to be dull and drugged, and lose all my senses....
> Ignorance, delusion and desire have for long ensnared me.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.179:37–38*

In these intriguing manuscripts, Christian, Judaic, Buddhist, Indian, Zoroastrian and Greek terminology are all used. Here, the "ten directions" are the eight points of the compass, plus up and down, while the "three modes of existence" are probably the three *guṇas* of Indian understanding.

demons See **devils**.

devil The chief spirit of evil and the enemy of God, generally considered to be the ruler of hell and sometimes of this world as well; used very loosely in modern times and probably in ancient times too, in various languages.

In religious thought, the devil is the personification of all that drives human beings to sin and wickedness. In the language of some twentieth-century mystics, the devil is thus equivalent to the universal mind, the power that rules over the causal, astral and physical worlds, also called the negative

power.[1] In this sense, the devil is equivalent to the gnostic and Platonic Demiurge, the creator-god of the lower realms in the heavenly hierarchy of creation. In fact, the third-century Hippolytus (*fl.*210–236), Bishop of Rome, credits the *Peratae* with understanding the devil of John's gospel[2] to be this Demiurge.[3] To other gnostics, however, the devil was created by the Demiurge as the ruler of this world only, and is thus a lesser power.[4]

Life in the physical universe is a mixture of pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, good and evil. Existence in the astral and causal regions, on the other hand, is increasingly blissful, as the soul ascends. The devil, as the gnostic Demiurge or negative power, is the author of both the good and evil of this world and the illusion, though blissful, of the astral and causal realms as well – regions which the gnostics called the "*aeon* copies",[5] "the region of righteousness which is mixed"[6] and by various other names. True 'good' is of God alone, and lies beyond the realm of duality created by the devil. Even intellectually, it seems logical that evil can only come into existence at the same time as good. They are the two sides of the same coin, and can only coexist.

It is this far wider conception of the devil's power that constitutes one of the greatest differences between the devil of popular conception and the devil of gnostic and mystic understanding. This means that the devil is also much more of a problem than most people conceive. But this is also the great deception of the devil. Souls are in his grip, but do not realize it. In fact, in this kind of mystic understanding, the mind itself is the agent of the devil, just as the soul is a drop of the Lord. The mind is within every soul in the devil's domain, and it is by this means that the web of illusion is maintained. The Lord, in the form of the Word, is present everywhere and in everything, but is seen only through the screen of the mind, of the devil. Many Christians believe, according to doctrine, that they are full of sin and evil. According to mystics, this is closer to the truth than many would like to think.

This understanding makes sense of the passage in John's gospel, where Jesus tells the Jews that their father is the devil, while his Father is the Lord:

> "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me,
> because my Word hath no place in you.
> I speak that which I have seen with my Father:
> and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."
>
> They answered and said unto him,
> "Abraham is our father."
>
> Jesus saith unto them,
> "If ye were Abraham's children,
> ye would do the works of Abraham.

But now ye seek to kill me,
a man that hath told you the Truth,
which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.
Ye do the deeds of your father."

John 8:37–41, KJV

Jesus says that it is because the "Word hath no place in you" – because they are not baptized in the Word – that they continue to act as bidden by their mind. They are hence under the thrall of the devil, the "father" or the mind. They claim, as Jews, to be descended from Abraham, but Jesus says that if they were truly Abraham's descendants – spiritually speaking – then they would follow Abraham's teachings, and would not be plotting to kill him. Hence, he again reiterates, "Ye do the deeds of your father." The story and dialogue is almost certainly one of this gospel writer's symbolic and fictional narratives, designed to bring out a particular spiritual point. This becomes increasingly clear as the dialogue proceeds:

Then said they to him,
"We be not born of fornication;
We have one father, even God."

Jesus said unto them,
"If God were your father, ye would love me:
for I proceeded forth and came from God;
Neither came I of myself, but He sent me.
Why do ye not understand my speech?
Even because ye cannot hear my Word.

"Ye are of your father the devil,
and the lusts of your father ye will do.
He was a murderer from the beginning,
and abode not in the Truth,
because there is no Truth in him.
When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:
for he is a liar, and the father of it."

John 8:41–44, KJV

When the Jews of the narrative insist that their father is God, Jesus replies that if they were really of God, then they would recognize him, for he has been sent by God. And using a play on the words "speech" and "Word", he points out that they cannot understand what he says because they cannot hear the divine Sound of the Word. The real 'utterance' of the real Master is, mystically speaking, the Word itself.

Jesus is then explicit: "Ye are of your father the devil," he says, adding that the devil was a "murderer from the beginning," and that "he is a liar." Jesus is alluding to the allegory of Adam and Eve. If you eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, God tells them, "Thou shalt surely die."[7] But by means of a lie, the serpent – symbolizing the devil – induces them to eat its fruit. In the *Genesis* narrative, their death consists of being cast out of the garden, and being given "coats of skins" to wear.[8] Consequently, they come to dwell in the physical universe, wearing material bodies which live only to die. Since this is like death to a soul, it can be said that the devil has killed or murdered souls, something he has been doing since the "beginning" of the creation.

The devil is also a liar because his domain is founded upon illusion or deception. A term commonly employed for this deception in the translation of early Christian and allied literature is 'Error', equivalent to the *māyā* (illusion) of Indian terminology. The devil "is a liar" – "and the father of it". He is the source of all Error or illusion; everything in his realms is a lie; it is something other than it seems. It is a bait, not a pleasure; a reflection, not reality; an illusion, not Truth.

It seems, therefore, that the way the devil is presented by Jesus, according to John's gospel, is at least consistent with the gnostic conception of the Demiurge as the creator-god.

That the devil of the New Testament is one of the rulers or *archons* of the higher worlds – another aspect of gnostic belief – is brought out by Paul in his letter to the *Ephesians:*

> My brethren, be strong in the Lord,
> and in the Power of His might.
> Put on the whole armour of God,
> that ye may be able to stand
> against the wiles of the devil.
>
> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
> but against principalities, against powers,
> against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
> against spiritual wickedness in high places.
>
> *Ephesians 6:10–12, KJV*

The "rulers of the darkness of this world" refers to the various subpowers or *archons* within the realm of the devil, something which Paul describes as "spiritual wickedness in high places". The gnostic tractate, *Expository Treatise on the Soul,* echoes the same words, where the meaning is made even clearer:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, ...
but against the world rulers of this darkness
and the spirits of wickedness.
Expository Treatise on the Soul 131, NHS21 pp.152–53

In gnostic thought, the "great Demon" is also understood to be the creator of worlds or *aeons* – realms within his jurisdiction, copied from a divine prototype of spiritual worlds:

The great Demon began to produce *aeons*
in the likeness of the real *aeons*.
Trimorphic Protennoia 40, NHS28 pp.412–13

The devil is mentioned in many texts of the early Christian period, usually in the general and religious, rather than the gnostic, sense. In the *Acts of Thomas*, it is the devil who is considered to constitute the fundamental human problem. Hence, Judas Thomas prays:

Let the gall of the devil be removed from us.
Acts of Thomas 158, ANT p.433

The devil is also an integral part of the teachings of the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī. Thus, a Manichaean psalmist alludes to the *Genesis* story, where the devil – the "Unclean Spirit" – is allegorized as a "snake", and to the gospel story of Jesus' baptism, where the Holy Spirit is symbolized as a "dove".[9] The two, says the writer, are forever "enemies to each other":

The living kingdom shall be revealed again,
the love of God, the white dove.
For the Holy Spirit was likened to a dove,
but the Unclean Spirit was likened to a snake.
The dove and the snake are enemies to each other:
the dove does not dwell in a pool unclean.
For the Holy Spirit does not take gold and silver,
but the Unclean Spirit is a lover of gold and silver.
Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.156

The battle of life, says the psalmist, is between these two.

The idea of one primary devil is by no means confined to Semitic and other Middle Eastern religions. It is also found, for instance, in the Graeco-Egyptian literature ascribed to Hermēs Trismegistus. In a Hermetic tractate found among the Nag Hammadi codices, Hermēs says:

> Listen, Asclepius! There is a great Daemon. The great God has appointed him to be overseer or judge over the souls of men.... Now, when the soul comes forth from the body, it is necessary that it meet this Daemon. Immediately he – the Daemon – will surround this one (the soul), and he will examine him in regard to the character that he has developed in his life.
>
> *Asclepius 76; cf. NHS11 pp.442–43*

This is a way of pointing out that man has to face judgment for all his actions and desires at the time of death. How this happens is beyond the ability of words to portray, and this account is probably as good as any other. Though mystics may use the terminology of human law courts, it is only by way of metaphor. No mystic is suggesting that there is a heavenly court that mirrors the human courthouse, presided over by the devil or one of his subordinate powers. Their language is only a way of describing things, using images that will be meaningful, as well as salutary, to the souls of this world.

In gnostic thought, the devil, as the ruler of this world, was seen as responsible for *all* its characteristics – its apparent good as well as its more obvious imperfections. In fact, the gnostics often regarded the entire material world as inherently negative or 'evil' in the sense that it is a prison for the soul, keeping it separate from God.

Jesus and Paul also speak of the devil as the prince or ruler of this world, which would include both its good and bad, and there are plenty of places where the gospels as well as gnostic and other literature support the view that Jesus taught a far wider understanding of the devil than Christians now hold or than the Jews held at that time.

Generally speaking, scholars have classified gnostic teachings as fundamentally dualistic, since they sometimes appear to promote the idea of two eternally separate gods or powers who vie for the control of this world. Some gnostic schools may indeed have come to believe in this, as did later Zoroastrianism, but this is not what mystics themselves teach. In many cases, scholars and others may have been too hasty in judging all references to such a power as rigorously dualistic. When correctly understood, the idea is actually less dualistic than the traditional concept of the devil, for in the mystic scheme of things the negative power or Demiurge has a definite role to play, given to him by the supreme Lord.

It is understandably difficult to comprehend how the devil could be acting within the overall will of God. The problem is an ancient one and the paradox was the source of a question put to Peter in the *Clementine Homilies* during a discussion on the origins of evil and the devil:

> Lazarus, who also was one of his followers, said: "Explain to us the harmony, how it can be reasonable that the Wicked One should be appointed by the righteous God to be the punisher of the impious ...?"
>
> And Peter said: "I indeed allow that the Evil One does no evil, inasmuch as he is accomplishing the law given to him. And although he has an evil disposition, yet through fear of God he does nothing unjustly; but, accusing the teachers of truth so as to entrap the unwary, he is himself named the accuser (the devil)."
>
> *Clementine Homilies XX:9, CH p.320*

Peter simply states the matter to be so, for there is no fully satisfying intellectual answer to a question which is essentially that of why God has made things the way they are. The problem is intellectually intractable, for if God is the supreme power and creator, He must have created the devil too. Or, taking things as they stand, if God is entirely opposed to the activities of the devil, why should He permit his continued existence? The very existence of the devil seems to presume that God actually needs him in order to manifest His creation. Taken to its logical conclusion, this would imply that God is the ultimate author of sin, something which is difficult to comprehend. It would also mean that God does not want all souls to be with Himself, at least at the present time.

These considerations may seem paradoxical enough, but actually the problem is even more complex for the question of individual free will, real or apparent, is also involved, as well as the need to determine what it is which is held to be free – the soul, the mind or the body?

It is no surprise, therefore, that there are no completely satisfying answers to all these conundrums, and mystics have summarized the matter by pointing out that the human mind cannot comprehend God's purpose and design. But as long as God wishes the show to go on, the devil or negative power must continue with his allotted task, for were all souls to return to God, then the creation would come to an end.

The devil's role of keeping souls captive is accomplished very simply by occupying their attention with the varied phenomena and activities of creation. Through the senses, the attention of the mind is held inexorably upon the play of life in this world. So effective is this process that many souls become so absorbed in the sensory world that they refuse to believe that anything else exists. They even come to think their own minds to be no more than an expression of the material forces perceived through their senses, a somewhat circular view of things. Souls thus remain in prison because of their absorption with the activities and the 'amenities' provided here. And there is no prison more secure than one to which the inmates have

become accustomed, treating it as their own home. This is why the gnostics described the material world as entirely evil, for whether good or bad, like a man struggling in quicksand, actions of any kind only serve to hold the soul here more securely.

See also: **Adversary**, **Enemy**, **negative power**, **Satan**, **Shayṭān**.

1. *i.e.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and his successors, *e.g.* Mahārāj Charan Singh, *Light on Saint Matthew, LSM* pp.117, 125, 152–53, 174, 180; *Light on Saint John, LSJ* pp.125, 128–29, 164.
2. *John* 8:37–45.
3. *cf.* Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V:12, *RAH* p.169.
4. *cf.* Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I:5.4, *AH1* pp.22–23.
5. *Zostrianos* 8–9, *NHS31* pp.44–47.
6. *Pistis Sophia* 282:111, *PSGG* p.235.
7. *Genesis* 2:17, *KJV*.
8. *Genesis* 3:21.
9. *Matthew* 3:16.

devils (Gk. *diabolos*), **demons** (Gk. *daimon*) Any of a number of spirits, generally regarded as evil, often subordinate to a prince of devils. Devils, demons and evil spirits have been a part of practically all religions and cultures, though from the variety of ancient mythology concerning them, it is clear that ideas about them varied greatly, and changed with time.

To the ancient Greeks, *daimons* were any of a variety of spirits or semidivine beings. To Plato, they were somewhere between gods and human beings. Hindu mythology has many legends of the generally evil *asuras,* giant demons who fought continuously with the *devas* (gods) and the *suras*. There are also the *rākshasas,* goblins who adopted the forms of animals or deformed human beings. The chief of the demons, *Vṛitra,* is the adversary of the deity *Indra.*

In Buddhism, *Māra* (*lit.* death) heads an army of demons, depicted in Buddhist art as hideous monsters, like the devils tormenting the damned in medieval European portrayals of hell. The demons commonly found in Tibetan iconography were once nature spirits in the shamanistic Bon religion of pre-Buddhist Tibet, but have been tamed by the power of Buddhist *boddhisattvas.*

In Islamic folklore, the *ghūl* (the origin of the word ghoul) are malevolent spirits or ghosts, waiting to waylay travellers, luring them to destruction. The *jinn,* on the other hand, may be malicious, but are often benign or even positively helpful. Foremost among the evil *jinn* is *Iblīs,* an angel who refused God's command to bow before Adam, and was expelled from paradise.

In Judaism, Christianity and ancient Middle Eastern religion, devils and demons are specifically evil spirits or evil deities, the identification of Jewish demons with Greek devils first appearing in the *Septuagint,* the earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (*c.*275–100 BCE). In the Latin *Vulgate* of the fifth century CE, idols and pagan gods in general are also called demons. In the icons of the Eastern Orthodox Church, devils are personified as imps, pulling the saints from the ladder of ascent to heaven.

In ancient Hebrew, as in other ancient Near Eastern languages, there was no specific term for demons. Demons were depicted as beings less powerful than gods with less developed individual personalities or identities. Sometimes, they were called 'evil gods'. Public worship was generally for the purpose of invoking the powers of the major deities, while demons were invoked in magical rites – including exorcisms, incantations and the use of amulets – directed at alleviating specific cases of individual human suffering or to protect women in childbirth.[1]

Perhaps reflecting the attempt by early Israelite spiritual leaders to instill a belief in one Supreme Being as the source of both good and bad, demons rarely appear in the Old Testament. Diseases and calamities are regarded as having been sent by God, rather than having an independent origin or being under the dominion of a separate evil power. Biblical writers disapprove of sorcerers, and the magical rites and incantations used to combat evil spirits.

Even so, a belief in evil spirits did persist among the Jews, probably because of the pervasive influence of their local culture. Demons were regarded as the source of disease and death, against whom the people did their best to protect themselves. Many of the evil spirits were believed to be ghosts, especially the disembodied spirits of those who had met violent deaths. *Shedim,* a general term for foreign gods, became a generic term for all kinds of demon, like the *se'irim,* hairy creatures, believed to haunt ruins. There were also individual demons, such as *Lilith,* the female night demon who was said to enter homes and steal children. It was also thought that particular demons caused specific diseases, like headaches. Contributing to the Jews' belief in angels and demons was their contact with Zoroastrianism, during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century BCE and later. Zoroastrianism viewed the relationship between good and evil as a battle between the two opposing forces of *Ormazd* (God) and *Ahriman* (the devil).

During the last few centuries BCE and the early centuries CE, rabbinic writings speak of 'unclean spirits' and 'evil spirits', wandering demons that could possess a person and speak through them, a class of demon later known, in the seventeenth century, as *dybbuks.* During this period, too, *Beliar* became the popular name for the chief demon, leader of evil spirits, the prince of devils. The gospels and other parts of the New Testament written during the rabbinic period (after 70 CE) reflect these prevalent beliefs.

By the time of the *Talmud* (fourth and fifth centuries CE), fear and concern about the *shedim* and *mazzikim* (the two commonest terms for demons, used almost interchangeably) had become a major preoccupation among Jews and others alike. People believed that they were constantly surrounded by thousands of demons. *Asmodeus (Ashmedai)*, the king of the demons in Babylon, for example, had a queen with 10,000 demon attendants. The Babylonian *Talmud* (*c.*500 CE) reveals a widespread belief in these spirits, and the rabbis give advice on various practices and incantations designed to drive them away and to avoid attracting them. Sitting near palm trees, for instance, or doing things in pairs, like drinking two cups of water, were supposed to attract a demon.

The belief in demons was so prevalent among the rabbis of the *Midrash* and the *Talmud* that they also read this belief into the Bible, despite the fact that demons are hardly mentioned there. Many of the rabbis understood the metaphors of psalm ninety-one, for example, to be references to demons. The psalm begins:

> He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,
> who abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
> will say to the Lord:
> "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
> For He shall save you from the snare of the fowler,
> and from the noisome pestilence.
> He shall cover you with His feathers,
> and under His wings shall you find refuge;
> His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
> You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
> nor of the arrow that flies by day;
> Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,
> nor of the destruction that wastes at noonday.
>
> *Psalm 91:1–6, JCL*

The rabbis considered it a psalm of protection against harmful visitations. It was said that Moses recited it on his ascent of Mount Sinai because of his fear of the *mazzikim* and the angels of destruction. It is prescribed as a recitation, "because the whole world is full of evil spirits and *mazzikim*",[2] and the *midrash* (commentary) to this psalm is a mine of demon lore.[3] Some later teachers, such as the great tenth-century Jewish rationalist and philosopher, Moses Maimonides, tried to counter these beliefs, but without much overall success.

In the medieval Kabbalah, the belief in demons was systematized and integrated with the Kabbalist belief in a hierarchy of higher powers and realms. Many elements from Christianity and Islam were also introduced,

as well as local European folk belief. Kabbalistic practices and formulae were employed to control evil spirits and strengthen the influence of the good or the positive. Exorcism of devils was also practised. A belief in demons was also largely accepted into the Hasidism of the late eighteenth century.

It is easy to understand how a belief in evil spirits was so deep-rooted in so many different cultures. It is natural to blame misfortune on external circumstances. If sickness, misfortune and death seem to happen without cause, certainly through no apparent fault of the individual, it is convenient to attribute the unwelcome circumstances to evil spirits or demons. This leads naturally to the need to appease these spirits by turning to magicians, sorcerers, spells, incantations and other practices.

Although Judaism provided the initial setting for Christianity, most people of a Christian background are familiar with devils only from the New Testament and later Christianity, where they are one of the more difficult concepts for the modern mind to take on board. It would be interesting to know what Jesus taught about them, but unfortunately this will remain uncertain, for nowhere are there any definitive sayings from him on the subject.

In the popular Jewish mind of Jesus' day, practically everything unknown seems to have been attributed to devils. As someone says to Jesus in Mark's gospel:

> Master, I have brought unto thee my son,
> which hath a dumb spirit.
>
> *Mark 9:17, KJV*

In this instance – "he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away"[4] – the man is generally thought to have been suffering from epilepsy. Similarly, any mental aberration – even that of 'deviant' belief – was thought to be due to the workings of a devil.

As in Judaism of the same period, devils are perceived to be under the dominion of the prince of devils – Satan or *Belial.* Thus, a fifth-century manuscript of Mark, discovered in Egypt early in the twentieth century, has an interesting addition to chapter fourteen, where "unclean spirits" are portrayed as agents of Satan, preventing human beings from approaching God:

> This age of wickedness and unbelief is under Satan
> who, by means of unclean spirits,
> does not permit men to apprehend the true Power of God.
>
> *Mark 16:14 (Freer logion); cf. ANT p.34*

Although the authenticity of this passage is unknown, the insertion is mentioned by Jerome,[5] writing in the early fifth century, as appearing in some

manuscripts, especially Greek copies, so it does at least date back to a relatively early period. Authentic or otherwise, the passage indicates a belief that it is Satan and his army of devils that keep man away from God. The "Power of God" was a common term for the creative Power, and this meaning may perhaps be intended in this instance.

It is clear from this and other instances that the devils of early Christianity have 'evolved' from merely unpleasant, problem-causing entities into spirits responsible for the evil in the human mind. This is a significant shift in meaning, and in this sense all the souls in this world were understood to be in thrall to these "devils". As Judas Thomas prays in the *Acts of Thomas*, at the time of a group baptism:

> Let these souls be healed and rise up,
> and become such as they were,
> before they were smitten by the devils.
> *Acts of Thomas 81; cf. ANT p.401*

In the *Acts of John*, man's seemingly uncontrollable predilection for the things of this world are described as a devil. "Mammon," says John, "is the name of a devil":

> For he who loves money is the servant of Mammon:
> And Mammon is the name of a devil
> who rules over carnal gains,
> and is the master of them that love the world.
> *Acts of John XVI; cf. ANT p.259*

Likewise, in the early Christian revelation, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, an 'angel' – who has been discoursing on quarrelling, evil-speaking, malice and rage – describes these weaknesses collectively as a "demon":

> The Lord will heal your former sins,
> if you cleanse yourselves from this demon.
> *Shepherd of Hermas IX:23.5, AF2 pp.276–77*

Human imperfections – physical or mental – were thus ascribed to devils or demons. In fact, in the gnostic *Apocryphon of John*, there is a passage where the writer has Jesus describe the constitution of matter according to the metaphysical concepts of the day. From these states of matter, he says, arise the "demons which are in the whole body":

> The origin of the demons which are in the whole body is determined to be four: heat, cold, wetness and dryness. And the mother of all of

> them is matter *(hylē)*. And he who reigns over the heat is *Phloxopha;* and he who reigns over the cold is *Oroorrothos;* and he who reigns over what is dry is *Erimacho;* and he who reigns over the wetness is *Athuro*. And the mother of all of these, *Onorthochras*, stands in their midst, for it is she who is illimitable, and she mixes with all of them. And she is truly matter *(hylē)*, for they are nourished by her.
>
> *Apocryphon of John 18, NHS33 pp.107, 109*

From these "demons," he continues, the "passions came forth":

> The four chief demons are: *Ephememphi* who belongs to pleasure, *Yoko* who belongs to desire, *Nenentophni* who belongs to grief, *Blaomen* who belongs to fear. And the mother of them all is *Esthensis-Ouch-Epi-Ptoe*. And from the four demons, passions came forth. And from grief came envy, jealousy, distress, trouble, pain, callousness, anxiety, mourning and so on. And from pleasure much wickedness arises, and empty pride and so on. And from desire comes anger, wrath, and bitterness, and bitter passion, and unsatedness and similar things. And from fear comes dread, fawning, agony and shame.
>
> *Apocryphon of John 18, NHS33 pp.109, 111*

It is these passions and demons which keep man's attention bound to this world and away from the inner reality. Hence, a Manichaean psalmist writes:

> Who will lead me beyond the walls
> and take me over the moats,
> which are full of fear and trembling
> from ravaging demons?
> Who will lead me beyond rebirths,
> and free me from … all the waves,
> in which there is no rest?
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān IVa:4–5, MHCP pp.82–83*

Man's spiritual problems, then, lie with his "demons", but – as many mystics have remarked – no soul can be induced to fall unless he has something within him that already wants to be tempted and to fall. Peter says as much in the *Clementine Recognitions,* where he goes on to point out that since Jesus had no such negative qualities within him, there was never any chance of him falling to the devil's temptations, as related in the gospels:[6]

> This we would have you know assuredly, that a demon has no power against a man, unless one voluntarily submit himself to his desires.

> Whence even that one who is the prince of wickedness, approached him who, as we have said, is appointed of God, king of peace, tempting him, and began to promise him all the glory of the world; because he knew that when he had offered this to others, for the sake of deceiving them, they had worshipped him. Therefore, impious as he was, and unmindful of himself, which indeed is the special peculiarity of wickedness, he presumed that he should be worshipped by him by whom he knew that he was to be destroyed.
>
> *Clementine Recognitions IV:34, CR p.301*

In the *Clementine Homilies,* Peter also says that the pure soul by itself would never consent to the impurity suggested by "demons":

> Whence many, not knowing how they are influenced, consent to the evil thoughts suggested by the demons, as if they were the reasoning of their own souls.
>
> *Clementine Homilies IX:12, CH p.154*

This is really the root of the matter. The soul, like a diamond encased in mud, is innately pure and has only one inclination – to return to God. It is the work of man's lower nature, understood here as the work of devils, to distract the soul from this primal longing.

The essential human problem, therefore, is how to escape the effect of the devils, however they may be conceived. In another passage from the same book, Peter is speaking to a group of people in Tripolis, a Mediterranean trading port now in northern Lebanon. Describing himself and his companions, by analogy, as "good merchantmen" and their teachings as "wares", he says that it is by accepting their wares that a soul is enabled to escape the effect of the "demons":

> Many forms of worship, then, having passed away in the world, we come, bringing to you, as good merchantmen, the worship that has been handed down to us from our fathers, and preserved; showing you, as it were, the seeds of plants, and placing them under your judgment and in your power. Choose that which seems good unto you.
>
> If, therefore, you choose our wares, not only shall you be able to escape demons, and the sufferings which are inflicted by demons but, yourselves also putting them to flight and having them reduced to make supplication to you, you shall forever enjoy future blessings.
>
> *Clementine Homilies IX:8; cf. CH p.152*

It is by putting one's demons "to flight", by casting out one's own devils, that the soul regains its original purity and is enabled to "enjoy future

blessings". And this, says the writer, comes about by accepting the wares of one such as Peter or Jesus.

From one mystical point of view, the devil – understood as the source of all diversity, of both 'good and evil' – is the universal mind, the power by which the one stream of the Word is broken up and reflected into an infinity of parts, forming the causal, astral and physical universes, in their turn. Each of these substreams of power can be called a devil – or an angel – depending upon whether its working is considered to be for good or evil, this being the fundamental duality or balance of opposites within the realms of the mind.

Even the faculties of a human being can be regarded as 'devils' or 'angels', since they are all derived or reflected from higher powers or energies. For someone who is habituated to think in the idioms of a modern scientific society, the idea that all physical energies are only reflections of something higher is difficult at first to grasp. But many mystics have said that this world and everything in it is a reflection or a projection of what lies within. Many of the gnostic writers of Jesus' time certainly thought of devils and angels as derived powers within the hierarchy of creation. The gnostic texts, for instance, are full of complex descriptions of the many emanations that comprise creation.

Spiritual ascent, therefore, requires that man overcome the devil, the greater mind, by overcoming all the minor 'devils' – and angels, too. He has to cast out the 'devils' of human imperfection from within himself, to rise up from the 'devils' that support the human form and pass through the higher realms of higher 'devils', until the soul escapes from the domain of the prince of devils altogether.

However the matter is considered, human beings are certainly opposed by many forces in their struggle to make spiritual progress. Lust, anger, greed, pride, jealousy and other unworthy passions are not will-o'-the-wisps. They exist within everyone as strong urges that cannot be ignored, and perhaps it makes little difference from a day-to-day, practical point of view how a person views them, for the struggle remains the same. When an individual has risen above the human sphere in mystic transport, then they will be in a position to examine the situation and see how it came about.

See also: **angels** (4.2), **asura** (4.2), **devil**, **dybbuk**, **ghūl**, **jinn** (4.2).

1. "Demons", in *Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD.*
2. *Midrash Tanḥuma, Mishpatim,* end.
3. *e.g. Midrash Rabbah, Psalm* 91; *Midrash Tanḥuma, Mishpatim,* end; *Midrash Rabbah, Numbers* 12:3–4.
4. *Mark* 9:18.
5. Jerome, *Dialogue against Pelagius* II:15; *e.g. JDPW* pp.317–18.
6. *Matthew* 4:1–11; *Luke* 4:2–14.

Dharm(a) Rāj (S/H), **Dharam Rāj, Dharam Rāi** (H/Pu) *Lit.* the lord *(rāj, rāi)* of judgment *(dharma);* the dispenser of justice; an epithet of *Yama* or *Yama Rāja* (the lord of death) as the embodiment of *dharma;* also called *Kāl.*

Dharma means law, duty, unalterable principles, religious principles and, hence, karmic law. *Dharam Rāi* is so called because he dispenses justice according to the karmic law or *dharma,* administering reward or punishment after death, according to the *karma* of the individual.

The image, commonly presented in Indian mystic literature, of *Dharam Rāi* dispensing justice after death in a heavenly court of law, is symbolic or metaphorical. Understood mystically, *Dharam Rāi* is the lord or power of the universal mind. The 'law' of the mind is *karma* and, in the mind worlds, everything happens automatically according to this divinely appointed 'law'. Thus, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes:

> In compliance with the orders of the Lord, *Dharam Rāi* asks all living beings after their death to render an account of their good and bad deeds, and he then deals with them accordingly. Hells are meant for the sinners, and heavens for those who have performed meritorious deeds. When one's stay in these regions is over, one has once again to tread the eternal wheel of birth and death. He is named *Dharam Rāi* because he dispenses justice according to law *(dharma)....* All the universe that is under him is destroyed in the course of time. He is, therefore, the lord of Time or Death, called *Kāl Purush* or *Kāl. Kāl Purush* sends his agents or incarnations to the earth in every age in order to keep the universe going.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 p.68*

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh also summarizes the role of *Dharam Rāi:*

> **1.** He is a servant of the true Lord *(Sat Purush),* and dispenses justice according to His Law. After death, he asks all beings to account for their actions, and he punishes the sinners.
>
> **2.** He is all-powerful and the creator of the three worlds *(trilokī).*
>
> **3.** He is the negative power *(Kāl),* and ensnares living beings in *māyā* or illusion.
>
> **4.** *Dharam Rāi* is not satisfied with recitals and penances, worship and sacrifices, pilgrimages and charities, and the like.
>
> **5.** There is no release from *Dharam Rāi* without taking shelter with the Master. An egotistic and proud person remains always in the bondage of *māyā.*

6. If one does not possess the wealth of the Name *(Nām)*, he has to face the Lord of death who demands the account of his deeds.

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 p.71

Mystics usually speak in the common language and idioms of ordinary people, and often in terms of prevalent cultural and religious beliefs. The Indian mystic, Kabīr, referring to the traditional Indian understanding of *Dharam Rāi,* writes bluntly:

O mind, redeem your bill of debt.
What value is your thriving trade
 that grew through shady deals?
What worth are your coffers
 full of jingling coins of silver,
 when you have cheated the great Merchant
 of the precious capital He lent you?
And in repayment of your debt,
 you proffer counterfeit coins!
Your debt now amounts to eighty-four hundred thousand,
 and you will pay the penalty
 with forfeiture of human birth.

O mind, pray redeem,
 redeem your bill of debt.
If this time you fail to clear it,
 you will face the wrath of *Dharam Rāi:*
He will impound all your wealth;
He will hurl you into the dungeon of sorrow,
 where all your pleas for mercy will be useless.

Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Pad 94, KG p.107; cf. KWGN pp.322–23

Likewise, Guru Nānak says:

There are many demerits (afflictions) in the body-cage....
Through the darkness of spiritual ignorance,
 the mortals putrefy in hell.
Whosoever forgets the Lord's Name,
 he has to pay up to *Dharam Rāi*
 the balance of his deeds.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1029, MMS

Other Saints have written in a similar, straightforward manner:

When *Dharam Rāi* asks you for the account,
  you will try to escape.
But that heartless court will take every penny into account.

Tulsī Sāhib, Shabdāvalī 1, Chetāvnī 2:3, TSH1 p.118

Saints say that the only way to escape from the negative power is through the mercy and blessings of a perfect Master who comes from beyond the realm of *Dharam Rāi:*

Shed thou thy shame, renounce all ego,
  and meet and live with the Saints.
They will make thee shed the fear of *Dharam Rāi,*
  and extricate thee from drowning in the sea of poison.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 1326, MMS

A soul initiated by a perfect Master is not under the jurisdiction of *Dharam Rāi* because the Master himself administers the *karma* of his disciples, tempering justice with mercy. Hence, it is said that a perfect Master has the power to forgive sins – to forgive or erase the effect of past deeds and thoughts upon the mind, so that they do not bear fruit in future lives. Mystics have spoken of this in a variety of metaphorical ways:

The Saints gave me the capital (of the Lord's Name),
  and I was then rid of my mind's anxiety.
What can *Dharam Rāi* do now,
  when all his account books are torn up?

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 614, MMS

Dharam Rāi is the creation of God:
And he comes not
  near God's serf and servant (*harijan sevak, i.e.* God's devotees).

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 555, MMS

My soul is absorbed,
  now that it has received the secret of the *Shabd.*
Now *Dharam Rāi* is sad,
  since the misery of my *karma* is over.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 35:26.1–2, SBP p.305

See also: **Yama**.

Discord Lack of harmony, conflict, strife, negativity; a term used by the Greek mystics, also translated as Strife or Negativity, for the source of all diversity and evil in creation. God, taught Pythagoras (*c*.580–500 BCE), is One, the Monad. From this One originated the dyad, the *kakos* daemon or evil spirit, the evil principle in creation. This Daemon is the source of all the pairs of opposites which constitute the universe known to man – male and female, light and darkness, good and evil, and the rest. As the Christian father, Hippolytus, wrote:

> Pythagoras ... declared the originating principle of the universe to be the unbegotten Monad and the generated dyad.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VI:18, RAH p.216*

Through a play on the Greek words, the dyad (from the Greek, *dyas*) was also known as *dyē* or misery, alluding to the suffering and misery caused by the activity of the evil spirit. Pythagorean doctrine goes on to enumerate a symbolic meaning of 'three', which represents the plurality and multiplicity caused by the activity of the dyad, and similarly finds a mystic meaning for all the numbers up to ten. But how much of this number symbolism was originated by Pythagoras and how much originated after his death is unknown. Number symbolism, however, as well as many other aspects of later Pythagoreanism, are commonly found in many of the more convoluted gnostic descriptions of the hierarchy of creation.

The dyad is essentially the same as the negative power of which some Indian mystics have spoken.[1] It is also the Demiurge of some of the later gnostics. Empedoclēs (*c*.490–430 BCE) wrote of the ever present 'conflict' between "Strife", "Discord" or "Negativity" and "Amity", "Friendship" or "Love" – between the negative power and God. "Discord" or "Negativity", said Empedoclēs, is the principle by which the creation and all souls are separated from God. It is also the architect of this world. Hippolytus further indicates that Empedoclēs described these two powers as deities or real forces in creation, not merely as intellectual abstractions.

Hippolytus asserts that this view of creation was originally Pythagorean. While it is Discord, he says, which separates, the purpose of "Friendship" or "Love" is to draw souls out of this world and back to the unity of God:

> Now, in their (the Pythagorean) system, Love forms the incorruptible, eternal world.... Discord, however, separates and puts asunder, and by manifesting numerous kinds of subdivision, forms the world. It is just as if one severs into small parts and divides arithmetically, the myriad into thousands and hundreds and tens; and *drachmae* into *oboli* and small farthings. In this manner, he says, Discord severs the substance of the world into animals, plants, metals and things similar

> to these. And the fabricator of the generation of all things produced is, according to them, Discord.
>
> Love, on the other hand, manages and provides for the universe in such a manner that it enjoys permanence, and reunites in oneness the divided and scattered parts of the universe. Bringing them forth from their (separated) mode of existence, (Love) unites and adds to the universe in order that it may enjoy permanence.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VI:20; cf. RAH pp.219–20*

In the writings of Empedoclēs, this interplay and creative process is brought out more clearly. As Hippolytus first summarizes it:

> (Empedoclēs) identifies as God the unity and unification of that condition in which they (all things) existed before the separation and production introduced by Discord.... For Empedoclēs affirms Discord to be a furious and perturbed and unstable Demiurge, thus pointing to Discord as the creator of the world. For this constitutes the condemnation and fate of souls which Discord forcibly severs from oneness.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VII:17; cf. RAH pp.293–94*

Hippolytus then goes on to quote Empedoclēs' description of the soul's transmigration, passing from body to body as an exile, "for thrice ten thousand years banished from bliss"[2] – that is, separated from God for an unimaginably long period of time. Hippolytus continues, explaining that Empedoclēs is

> identifying as blissful, those (souls) that have been collected by Friendship (*i.e.* God) from the majority of beings into the oneness of the spiritual world. He asserts that those others are exiles....
>
> For souls change, body after body being altered, and are punished by Discord, not being permitted to continue for long in one frame. Souls are thus involved in all possible forms of punishment by Discord through being changed from body to body.... This is the punishment which the Demiurge inflicts....
>
> The souls, then, thus detested and tormented and punished in this world, are, according to Empedoclēs, collected by Friendship as being a certain Good (power), and one that pities the groaning of these (souls) and (their enthralment by) the disorderly and wicked devices of furious Discord. And (likewise, Friendship is) eager and (also) instructed to lead forth souls from the world, little by little, and to domesticate them with unity, in order that all things, being conducted by herself, may attain oneness.

Therefore, because of this divisive arrangement of the world on the part of destructive Discord, Empedoclēs admonishes his disciples to abstain from all sorts of animal food. For he asserts that the bodies of animals are such as feed on the habitations of punished souls.

And he (also) teaches those who are hearers of such doctrines to refrain from intercourse with women, in order that they may not co-operate with and assist those works which Discord fabricates, always dissolving and forcibly severing the work of Friendship. (For) Empedoclēs asserts that this (sex and reproduction) is the greatest force in the administration of the universe, expressing himself somehow thus:

There's something swayed by Fate,
the ancient, endless law of gods,
and sealed by potent oaths.

He (thus) describes as Fate, the passage from unity into plurality through (the power of) Discord, and from plurality into unity through (the power of) Friendship (Love)....

And (Empedoclēs asserts) that Discord is always guilty of ... covetousness and forcible abduction of the things of Friendship, and of appropriation of them to itself. But that Friendship, inasmuch as it is always and invariably a certain Good (power) and intent on union, recalls and brings towards (itself), and returns to oneness, the parts of the universe that have been forcibly severed, and tormented, and punished in the creation by the Demiurge.

Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VII:17; cf. RAH pp.294–96

One of the greatest difficulties in determining exactly what the Greek mystics taught is that most of their writings have come down to present times only as fragments, quoted among the writings of others. Even so, from the comparatively few extant extracts, there is no doubt that Empedoclēs referred frequently to "Discord". It is, he says, the power that leads to physical birth and its consequent suffering:

O woe, O you pitiful race of mortals, of all joy bereft,
from what contentious Discord were you born,
from what depths of grief.

Empedoclēs, Fragment 124; cf. EHL p.128

As Hippolytus indicates, Empedoclēs describes "Discord" as the power opposing "Love", "Friendship" or "Amity", the cause of constant change and separation from the oneness of "Love":

Double is the birth of mortal things
  and double their demise.
For the coming together of all,
  both causes their birth and destroys them;
And separation nurtured in their being
  makes them fly apart.
These things never stop changing throughout;
At times coming together through Love in one whole,
  at other times being violently separated by Discord.
Thus, on one side, one whole is formed out of many,
  and then again, wrenched from one another,
  they make up many out of one.
Thus they come into being,
  and their life is not their own.

Empedoclēs, Fragment 17; cf. EHL p.55

From the few extant citations, it is clear that Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE) also taught the existence of such a power. It is, he says, a power of "justice", the cause of constant "turmoil", governing the way things happen in this world:

It should be understood that war is the common condition;
That Discord is justice,
  and that all things come to pass
  through the compulsion of Discord.

Heraclitus, Fragment 26; cf. HPW p.29

This "justice," he observes, is a matter of "compulsion" – it is an automatic and unavoidable response to all actions.

See also: **Demiurge**.

1. *i.e.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and his successors, *e.g.* Mahārāj Charan Singh, *Light on Saint Matthew, LSM* pp.117, 125, 152–53, 174, 180; *Light on Saint John, LSJ* pp.125, 128–29, 164.
2. Empedoclēs, in Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VII:17, *RAH* p.294.

Dragon A mythical beast usually characterized as possessing a scaly, winged reptilian body with a long tail, and breathing fire; religiously and mystically, the devil, the imagery stemming from the serpent in the *Genesis* allegory. The metaphor is common in the Manichaean psalms. Speaking of the disciples of a Saviour, one psalmist writes that those on whom the "Word of God" descends apply themselves to "fight the Dragon":

They think of them that are on high,
and arm themselves to fight against the Dragon.
The Word of God is sweet
when it finds (inner) ears to hear it.
It lodges not in a mind that is shut,
it makes not its way into a shrine (temple, body)
that is polluted.
It lodges with the maidens (devotees),
and dwells in the hearts of the continent.
They with whom it lodges – its grace spreads over them.
They gird up their loins and arm themselves
to fight with the Dragon.

Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.151

See also: **serpent**.

Druj (Av/Pv) *Lit.* untruth, deceit, falsehood; used extensively by Zarathushtra to mean the power from which all negativity emanates; hence, the Untruth, the Deceiver, the Lie; contrasted by Zarathushtra with *Ashā*, divine or mystic Truth:

When a person has conquered the Untruth *(Druj)* by Truth *(Ashā)*,
and when he attains
what false teachers *(daevas)* and those like them
have forever said to be delusion –
Then, O *Ahurā*, through Your blessings,
love of You will ripen in his heart.

Zarathushtra, Yasna 48:1; cf. DSZ p.657

In later Zoroastrian religion, the *Druj* came to be personified as a foul and stinking hag, a female demon.

See also: **Ahriman**, **Akō Mainyu**.

dybbuk (He) *Lit.* cleaving to, attaching to; an evil spirit, an unclean spirit, believed to enter and take possession of a person; prominent in Eastern European Jewish folklore from the seventeenth century onwards. The Kabbalah uses the allied verb *davok* to describe the manner by which an evil spirit is believed to attach itself to someone.

A belief in evil spirits is absent from the Bible, and first appears in Jewish folklore during the Talmudic period (100–500 CE). But the belief probably

existed in earlier times as well, if only from contact with Babylonian and other Middle Eastern cultures. The notion of evil spirits also changed with time. In the New Testament and during the Talmudic period, they were regarded as demons that entered the bodies of sick people. Later, it was believed that they were the souls of the dead who could not find rest. Later still, after the sixteenth century, in keeping with the spread of the belief in transmigration during Kabbalistic times, they were believed to be the souls of those who had committed such grave sins that they were not even allowed to reincarnate into other bodies, and thus tried to possess the bodies of the living.

Alongside the belief in *dybbuks* arose practices for their exorcism. Some of the Kabbalists and *Ḥasidim* published exorcism manuals, recommending the use of certain combinations of holy names and other practices. Those rabbis who were deemed capable of performing exorcisms were called masters of the name *(ba'alei ha-shem).*

Dybbuks may be external entities or they may symbolize a person's negative tendencies. Either way, a *dybbuk* can only exercise control over someone whose own self-control is sufficiently weak.

The *dybbuk* became a popular theme in literature, theatre and opera, prevalent until well into the twentieth century.

See also: **devils**.

Enemy One who is hostile or opposed; one of the many metaphors for the devil used in Judaic, Christian and other allied texts. In much of the Hebrew Bible, the enemy refers literally to the various adversaries of the Israelites. In some places, however, the context is clearly spiritual, and the "Enemy" seems to convey a higher meaning, as the Tempter or Evil One, the personification of human imperfection. This is especially true in the *Psalms:*

> Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.
> From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
>   when my heart is faint;
> Lead me to the rock that is too high for me.
> For You have been a shelter for me,
>   and a strong tower against the Enemy.
> I will abide in Your tent for ever;
> I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.
>
> *Psalm 61:2–5, JCL*

The psalmist sees God as a "rock" and a "strong tower" against the onslaught of the "Enemy", against his own negative tendencies – his imperfections, doubts and temptations. Many contemporary Jewish commentators have

also extracted universal, spiritual lessons from the texts of such psalms, understanding the enemy to be the *yeẓer ha-Ra*ʻ (the evil Tempter, *lit.* the evil inclination) – the human imperfections and fears that challenge every seeker of God.

In Christian texts, which often take their metaphors from the Jewish scriptures, the meaning is more explicit. In the parable of the tares, for instance, found in Matthew, Jesus says:

> The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man
> which sowed good seed in his field:
> But while men slept, his enemy came
> and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.
> But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit,
> then appeared the tares also.
>
> So the servants of the householder came and said unto him:
> "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field?
> From whence then hath it tares?"
> He said unto them, "An enemy hath done this."
>
> *Matthew 13:24–28, KJV*

Jesus then explains that the "enemy" is the "devil":

> He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;
> The field is the world;
> The good seed are the children of the kingdom;
> But the tares are the children of the Wicked One;
> The enemy that sowed them is the devil.
>
> *Matthew 13:37–39, KJV*

The seed of the Word is sown in the "children of the kingdom", those who receive baptism into the Word. But the tares or imperfections of the human mind are also sown in the disciple – by the Enemy, the devil. Alluding to this parable, the same imagery is used in the *Acts of Thomas,* when Judas Thomas says:

> Let not my seed of wheat
> be changed for tares out of your land;
> Let not the Enemy carry it away,
> and mingle his own tares with it;
> For truly your land receives not his tares,
> nor indeed can they be stored in your houses.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 145; cf. ANT p.428*

Using a selection of military metaphors, Judas Thomas also praises Jesus as:

> Defender and Helper in the fight of your servants,
> turning away and scaring the Enemy from us:
> Who fights in many battles for us,
> and makes us conquerors in all;
> Our true and undefeated Champion;
> Our holy, victorious and invincible General;
> You who give to your own a joy that passes not away,
> and a rest wherein is no affliction.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 39; cf. AAA pp.180–81, ANT p.384*

In another passage, Judas Thomas addresses the devil directly, as man's "Enemy who is never at rest":

> O evil that cannot be repressed!
> O Enemy who is never at rest!
> O Envious One who is never quiet!
> O Hideous (One) who strives with the comely,
> that you may subdue them beneath yourself!
> O (you) who have many hideous shapes,
> and appear as you will,
> but your black colour never changes,
> because it is your nature!
> O Crafty (One) and disturber of good works!
> O bitter tree, the fruits of which are like unto it!
> O lying slanderer,
> who strives with those that are not your own!
> O deceit which, coiled up upon itself,
> rears itself with impudence,
> and dares to assail those who are better than itself!
> O wickedness, that creeps like a servant, and crawls,
> and enters in, and aims at virtue!
>
> But how long do I say these things?
> (Keep me not waiting), but show yourself quickly,
> you Enemy of the servants of the Messiah,
> that these multitudes may see
> that we call them unto the true God.
>
> *Acts of Thomas V; cf. AAA p.184*

The term has also been used consistently in Islam. The Sufi mystic, Ḥāfiẓ (*c.*1326–1390), recommends staying close to the "Friend", the *Murshid* or

Master, in order to break free from this "Enemy", whom he also calls by the Zoroastrian name of *Ahriman:*

> Hold in your hand the garment of the Friend:
>   from the Enemy break free.
> Be a man of God, and safely pass by *Ahriman.*
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.214, DHM (458:2) p.414, DIH p.346; cf. DHWC (457:8) p.763*

While the Enemy refers to the devil, the enemies are commonly used as a metaphor for human imperfections.

See also: **Adversary**, **enemies** (▸2).

Evil One (He. *ha-Ra'*) The devil, Satan; an expression used by Jesus and consequently appearing in early Christian literature. The term appears as such in most modern translations of the Lord's Prayer:

> And lead us not into temptation,
>   but deliver us from the Evil One.
>
> *Matthew 6:13, NIV*

Deliverance from the Evil One also implies deliverance or liberation from the domain of the Evil One: this world, and by extension – and as many gnostics of early Christianity understood it – the cycle of birth and death.

The writer of the early Christian *Odes of Solomon* also looks forward to being "saved from the Evil One" "because of Thy Name" – by means of the Word:

> As the eyes of a son upon his father,
>   so are my eyes at all times towards Thee, O Lord;
> For with Thee is my comfort (*lit.* my breasts)
>   and my pleasure.
> Turn not Thy compassion away from me, O Lord,
>   and take not Thy kindness from me.
> Stretch out to me at all times Thy Right Hand,
>   and be my guide even unto the end,
>   according to Thy good pleasure.
> Let me be well-pleasing before Thee,
>   because of Thy Glory;
> And because of Thy Name,
>   let me be saved from the Evil One.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 14:1–5*

The Evil One *(ha-Ra')*, is also used in Jewish literature, as in the medieval *Zohar:*

> The Evil One *(ha-Ra')* who is the same as the evil Tempter *(yezer ha-Ra')*, dominates the world from many sides, and exercises great power therein. He is indeed the very same mighty serpent through whom Adam fell into sin, and who entices mankind to draw him unto themselves until he draws out their souls.
>
> *Zohar 1:152b, ZSS2 p.89, JCL*

The terms for evil *(ra')* and the Evil One *(ha-Ra')* are essentially the same in Hebrew. *Ra'*, for instance, appears in *Proverbs* as "*ashalmah Ra'* (I will repay evil)":

> Do not say, I will repay *(ashalmah)* evil *(ra');*
> But wait on the Lord, and He will save thee.
>
> *Proverbs 20:22, KB*

The *Zohar* interprets this passage to mean, "Do not give strength to ('make complete') the Evil One by giving in to sin. Wait for the grace of God, and He will save you":

> But when a man strays to the left, the evil Prompter thereby gets the mastery over the good Prompter, and after having been disabled is restored to strength through the man's sins, for this burden becomes strong only through man's sins. Hence, it behoves man to see that the evil Prompter does not become reinforced through his sins, inasmuch as it is the good Prompter to whom more power should be given and not the evil Prompter. Hence, Scripture teaches us: "Say not thou: I will make complete *(ashalmah)* the Evil One *(Ra');* wait for the Lord, and he will save thee."[1]
>
> *Zohar 1:201a, ZSS2 p.264, JCL*

See also: **devil**.

1. *Proverbs* 20:22.

evil spirits See **devils, dybbuk**.

framer of bodies The negative power; an epithet encountered in a Mandaean allegory concerning the liberation of the soul. According to the story, the

soul – having "loosed her chain and broken her bonds" of the body and of sin – has "turned around" and is able to see the power which has kept her bound. Knowing that she has now escaped, she provokes this "framer of bodies" by pointing out that the soul whom he had once held so firmly in his grip has now slipped away from him, like trying to hold water in the palm of the hand. The "framer of bodies" is at first aghast, but realizing that he is now powerless to prevent the soul's escape, he sends her on her way with his blessing:

> Bliss and peace will there be
> on the road which Adam (man) attained:
> Bliss and peace shall there be
> on the road which the soul traverses.
> The soul has loosed her chain and broken her bonds:
> she has shed her physical garment.
>
> She turned around, saw it and was revolted;
> She uttered an evil curse on the being
> who had clothed her in the body.
> She provoked the framer of bodies,
> she roused him from the lair in which he lay.
> She said to him,
> "Rise up, look, framer of bodies,
> the hollow of your hand is filled with water!"
>
> The voice of the framer of bodies is heard,
> who howls and weeps for himself, and says,
> "Woe is me that the hollow of my hand
> is filled with water!"
>
> And to her he says: "Go in peace, daughter of the free,
> whom in the house of evil ones they called handmaiden.
> Go in peace, pure pearl that was transported
> from the treasuries of Life;
> Go in peace, fragrant one who imparted
> her fragrance to the stinking body.
> Go in peace, radiant one, who illumined
> her dark house.
> Go in peace, pure and chosen one,
> immaculate and spotless!"
>
> Flying, the soul went until she reached the house of Life (God):
> she arrived at the house of Life.

'Uthras (pure souls) went forth towards her, saying to her,
"Take and put on your robe of radiance,
and set on your living wreath!
Arise, dwell in the *shkinata* (inner realms),
the place where the *'uthras* abide, conversing."

Mandaean Prayer Book 69; cf. CPM pp.55–56

ghūl (A/P) (pl. A. *ghīlān, aghwāl;* P. *ghūlān*) *Lit.* ghoul; in Islamic folklore, an evil desert demon that can assume any shape it pleases, male or female, to waylay travellers and lure them to destruction; hence, a witch, an ogre, a monster. The ghoul is said to wait by the roadside to draw travellers off their chosen path. The Sufis compared the *nafs,* the lower mind that craves sense pleasures, to a *ghūl;* they also likened the *waswās,* the whisperings of the mind, to a *ghūl;* and they likened Satan *(Shayṭān)* himself, whose purpose is to keep all beings from progressing on the spiritual path, to a *ghūl.*

Rūmī explains that the work of the *ghūl* is not to grab the individual violently and drag him from the path, but to make a shadow show and confuse him as to where the real path lies. Until the seeker has obtained the touchstone that instantly distinguishes pure gold from alloy, he must rely on one who has – a *Shaykh,* a *Murshid,* a *Pīr,* a Master. Rūmī describes exactly how the *ghūl,* as the *waswās* (whisperings of the mind) works at luring travellers:

Old and young have become gold seekers,
but the common eye does not distinguish alloy from gold.
The pure gold shot a beam on the alloy:
see that you choose not the gold
on the ground of mere speculation, without a touchstone.

If you have a touchstone, choose;
Otherwise, go, devote yourself to him who knows.
Either you must have a touchstone within your own soul,
or if you know not the Way, do not go forward alone.

The cry of ghouls *(ghūlān)* is the cry of an acquaintance –
an acquaintance who would lure you to perdition.
She (the ghoul) keeps on crying,
"Hark, O caravan people!
Come towards me, here is the track and the landmarks."
The ghoul *(ghūl)* mentions the name of each, saying,
"O so-and-so," in order that she may make
that person one of those who sink.

When he reaches the spot, he sees wolves and lions,
his life lost, the road far off, and the day late.

Please tell me, what is the ghoul's *(ghūl)* cry like?
It is, "I desire riches, I desire position and renown."
Bar these voices from your heart,
so that mysteries may be revealed.
Repeat the Name of God,
drown the cry of the ghouls *(ghūlān)*,
close your narcissus eye to this vulture.
Know the difference between the false dawn and the true;
Distinguish the colour of the wine from the colour of the cup,
that, perchance, from the eyes which see the seven colours,
patience and waiting may produce an eye
with which you may behold colours other than these,
and may behold pearls instead of stones.
What pearl? Nay, you will become an ocean,
you will become a sun traversing the sky.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:744–58; cf. MJR2 p.260

In one of his poems, Rūmī also says that were he not guided by the "fragrance of love's city", he too would be "caught by the ghouls, like those lost in greed's desert":

Were I a plaything in the hand of every heartache,
I would not be clever and wise, but a fool.
Did not the sun of love belong to me,
like Saturn, I would sometimes ascend in grief,
and sometimes descend.
Were the fragrance of love's city not my guide,
I would be caught by the ghouls *(ghūl)*,
like those lost in greed's desert! …
If the rose garden of the Spirit did not caress the afflicted,
how could I be a Messenger from the garden of faithfulness,
like the east wind?

Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 2996:31846–50,
KSD6 p.229, KDS2 p.1108, in SPL p.341

See also: **devils, nafs** (5.1).

greater mind That mind which includes everything from the highest levels of the universal mind at the summit of the causal region, down to the individual

minds of physically incarnate souls; a term used to convey the integration that exists within all levels of the mind, particularly with regard to the working out of the law of cause and effect, and the manifestation of all forms within creation – physical, astral or causal; identifiable, in certain respects, with the *mahat* of Indian philosophy, particularly of the *Sāṅkhya* school.

The greater mind is a vast all-encompassing mind that controls and integrates everything within its sphere, and of which the individual minds of individual creatures are only tiny parts. All activity and diversity in the physical, astral and causal worlds are aspects of and governed by this greater mind. At the physical level, even science recognizes – in fact presumes – that there are causes or reasons for everything. This is the fundamental premise upon which science operates: trying to find the reasons for things. What is not so well understood is the origin of this causality, and the extent to which everything is ordered and organized by it. Absolutely nothing, say the mystics, is a matter of chance.

Mystics teach that actions and thoughts all have an effect, not only immediately, but also at a later date. Every act and every thought (especially desires and actions seeking particular self-oriented results) leave impressions upon the individual mind. This storehouse of impressions finds fulfilment by creating the fabric of future lives, for all individual minds are linked as parts of the greater mind. The greater mind is like a colossal multilevel, ultradynamic megacomputer, able to sort all the data (impressions) and automatically create a world in which everything is taken into account, for each and every individual soul. In this sense, through their *karma*, all incarnate souls are shareholders and co-creators of the world they inhabit. No energy is wasted. Everything has a result of some sort, greater or lesser, according to the mental impressions created. This also means that the overall pattern of life is destined. From a higher point of view, there is very little room for the operation of free will.

See also: **mahat** (5.2), **universal mind**.

hunter One who seeks out other creatures with the intention of killing or capturing, either for sport or food, or both; metaphorically, the negative power, who brings souls to the material universe where death is inevitable. Hunters, especially in olden times, would lay snares and nets to catch their prey. Hence, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> The hunter *(shikārī) Kāl* is on your heels:
> the ignorant soul is caught unawares in his snares.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:10.11, SBP p.195*

In Indian descriptions of creation, the Hindu trinity of *Brahmā, Vishṇu* and *Shiva* personify the three *guṇas* (attributes) that constitute *māyā* (illusion), which envelops all things. Therefore, says Kabīr, these three are "hunters" who "have trapped the entire creation":

> With the bait of poison *(i.e. māyā),*
>   the three gods have assumed the role of hunters *(byādh).*
> Spreading a huge net of *karma,*
>   they have trapped the entire creation.
>
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Shabd 6:6–7, KSS1 p.59*

Māyā, the power of illusion, has also been likened to a huntress.

See also: **huntress** (6.2), **Snarer**, **vyādh**.

Iblīs (A/P) The devil of Islamic mythology, charged with the task of tempting and waylaying human beings; generally understood to be derived from the Greek *diabolos* (devil), though some philologists have derived it from the Arabic *ublisa* (he was made to despair).

There is some ambiguity in the legends concerning the origins of *Iblīs.* According to the *Qur'ān,* when God created Adam, all the angels obeyed His command to bow to Adam, except *Iblīs:*

> And behold, We said to the angels:
> "Bow down to Adam," and they bowed down:
> Not so *Iblīs:* he refused and was haughty:
>   he was of those who reject faith.
>
> *Qur'ān 2:34, HQSA*

Elsewhere in the *Qur'ān, Iblīs* gives as his excuse:

> I am better than he (man);
> You have created me of fire,
>   and him from clay.
>
> *Qur'ān 7:12; cf. AYA*

That is, Adam was made to inhabit a body of gross, physical matter. *Iblīs,* on the other hand, inhabits a body of "fire", a finer, purer form of matter that exists on a subtler plane. *Iblīs* therefore considers himself superior.

In a parallel story, recorded at another place in the *Qur'ān, Iblīs* is identified as both an angel and "one of the *jinn*":

Behold! We said to the angels,
"Prostrate to Adam":
They prostrated, except *Iblīs*.
He was one of the *jinns*,
and he broke the command of his Lord.

Qur'ān 18:50, HQSA

These accounts of the origin of *Iblīs* are conflicting in that *Iblīs* is said to be both an angel and a *jinn*. *Iblīs* himself even says that he is made of fire, the implication being that he was a *jinn*, because in Islamic thought, the *jinn* are made of fire, while the angels are made of light.

In Sufi descriptions, the *charkh-i nārī* (sphere of fire) is the highest sphere under the firmament of the moon, which marks the top of the physical region of creation. The *jinn* are denizens of that plane of fire, while the angels belong to the higher heavens, and are made of light, implying a yet finer form of matter. The nature of the *jinn* is to rebel against and disobey God, whereas the nature of the angels is obedience to God, and according to this line of thought, *Iblīs* is the chief of the *jinn*.

However, both views are prevalent: those who say that *Iblīs* is an angel hold that his portrayal as one of the *jinn* is metaphorical, representing his qualities. Others maintain that *Iblīs* is a similitude for the power inherent in human nature which leads man astray.

Even though the idea of fallen angels is not acceptable in traditional Islamic theology, others have considered *Iblīs* to have once been *'Azāzīl*, previously one of the angels, who was then cursed for his disobedience and given the name of *Iblīs*. At the same time, he was changed from an angel made of light to a *jinn* made of fire. Of all the angels, *'Azāzīl* had been exemplary in his *'ibādah* (devotion, worship). It is said that he had rendered perfect obedience to God for 700,000 years. It is thus to *Iblīs*, as the fallen *'Azāzīl*, to whom Rūmī is referring when he describes *Iblīs* as "the ascetic of so many thousand years".[1]

Rūmī makes extensive use of the legend of *Iblīs*. In another place, depicting God's power to raise lowly man on high, and to send *Iblīs* to the depths, Rūmī retells the story of the fall of *Iblīs*:

He (God) said to an earthly creature (man):
"Unfold your wings."
To the creature of fire, He said:
"Go, become *Iblīs*: begone under the seventh earth
with your imposture!
O earthly Adam, go above the star *Suhā*;
O fiery *Iblīs*, go to the bottom of the earth."

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1622–24; cf. MJR2 p.304

Here, the "seventh earth" refers to the lowest level of creation. According to Islamic cosmology, the creation is composed of fourteen *ṭabaqāt* (levels, strata) – seven celestial and seven earthly. Some commentators equate the "seventh earth" with hell, which Islamic lore places under the 'pedestal' of the world, above the Bull and the Fish which support the world (the Behemoth and Leviathan of the Bible). But there are differences between the various accounts of where *Iblīs* was sent: Sufis, like other mystics, are more concerned with using the figure of *Iblīs* to convey spiritual truths than with the consistency of a mythological cosmology.

Whatever the differences, the legends generally agree that God gave *Iblīs* the task of tempting and waylaying humanity. In the *Qur'ān*, God says, "Dismay with thy voice any of them whom thou canst, and urge thy horse and foot against them."[2] Since, according to the *Qur'ān*, "God guides whom He wills and misguides whom He wills,"[3] one of the names of God is *al-Muḍill*, the Misleader. *Iblīs* may thus be seen as God's agent for misleading. As *Iblīs* says in the *Qur'ān:* "By Thy might, I will surely beguile them, every one."[4] That is, even beguilement requires the might of God. This is why *Iblīs* claims that he has no power to pervert the truly righteous; he is only carrying out God's command to test the righteous and the wicked alike, and to show them their worth:

God has made me the test of lion and cur.
God has made me the test of genuine coin and counterfeit.
When have I blackened the false coin's face?
I am the money changer: I have only valued it.
To the good, I act as guide:
  I prune away the dry branches.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2673–75; cf. MJR2 p.359

Iblīs is also called *al-waswās al-Khannās* (the whispering Slinker), "because he habitually draws back *(yata'akhkharu)* when a man thinks of God *(dhakara Rabbahu)*".[5] He is depicted as a small animal who hides in a hole, slinking out to whisper some evil, and slinking back again in fear before he should be seen by the hunter. Rūmī compares this behaviour to that of a "little hedgehog":

The name that denotes the devil's becoming hidden
  from men's souls and going into that hole
  is *khunūs* (slinking back);
His *khunūs* is like the *khunūs* of the hedgehog:
  like the head of the hedgehog, he pops in and out;
For God has called the devil, *Khannās* (the Slinker),
  because he resembles the head of the little hedgehog.

The hedgehog is continually hiding its head,
because of its fear of the cruel hunter;
But, when it finds an opportunity, it puts out its head:
and by this ploy it makes a snake its prey.
If the fleshly soul *(nafs)* had not (cleverly)
waylaid you from within,
how would brigands (human imperfections)
have any power to lay a hand upon you?

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4058–63; cf. MJR4 p.227

Rūmī also tells a story of how *Iblīs,* given the divine assignment of tempting and testing men, gives the task his best attention. God shows him various means of tempting man – wealth, possessions, rich food and drink, precious garments, wine, music and more. *Iblīs* is interested, but not satisfied until God shows him the "beauty of woman, greater than the intellect and patience of men". *Iblīs* is delighted:

The accursed *Iblīs* said to the Creator,
"I want a mighty snare for this hunt."
God showed him gold, silver and herds of horses:
"You can steal away people with these."
He said, "Marvellous," but his lips dropped down morosely;
He became shrivelled and sour like a lemon.

Then God gave that ill-starred satan gold and jewels
from wonderful mines.
"Take these other snares, O Accursed One!"
He said, "Give me more than this, O Best of Helpers!"

He gave him sweet and rich foods, delicious drinks,
and many garments of silk.
He said, "O Lord, I need more help than this,
so that I can tie them with 'a rope of palm fibre'.[6] …
I want another snare, O Sulṭān of the Throne –
a man-throwing snare, treacherous in deception."

God brought wine and music, and placed them before him.
Iblīs smiled a little, and almost became happy.
Then he called out to God's eternal Attribute of "Leading Astray":
"Stir up dust from the depths of temptation's ocean!"

So He showed him the beauty of woman,
greater than the intellect and patience of men.

Iblīs snapped his fingers with glee,
  and began to dance, crying:
"Give her to me at once –
  I have attained to my desire!"

When he saw those languorous eyes
  that agitate the mind and the intellect,
  and the loveliness of that fascinating cheek
  on which man's heart burns like rue seed on the fire,
  the face, the mole, the eyebrow, the cornelian lips –
God Himself seemed to shine forth
  from behind a delicate veil.
He deemed her coquetry and subtle movements
  to be as God's revelation behind a gossamer veil.

Rūmī, Maśnavī V:942–48, 951–53, 956–61; cf. MJR6 pp.58–59, in SPL pp.286–87

Although *Iblīs* makes use of the passions that lure and ultimately control the *nafs* (lower mind), yet the characteristic quality associated with him is that of acute intellect. When told to bow to Adam, rather than obeying God, he puts forward a logical argument regarding the superiority of fire over clay. Thus, in Sufi literature, *Iblīs* is often associated with intellectual or theological knowledge *('ilm),* while Adam represents mystical knowledge. Or, again, mystics point out that *Iblīs* argued with God, while Adam wept with self-abandonment and bewilderment. Thus, mystics used the story of *Iblīs* to show that the way to God is not through intellectual or theological reasoning or acquisition of knowledge:

He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries)
  knows that intelligence is of *Iblīs,*
  while love is of Adam.

Intelligence is swimming in the high seas:
He is not saved:
  he is drowned at the end of the business.
Leave off swimming, let pride and enmity go:
This is not a *Jayḥūn* (Oxus) or a lesser river,
  it is an ocean;
And, moreover, it is the deep Ocean without refuge:
  it sweeps away the seven seas like straw.
Love is as a ship for the elect:
  seldom is calamity the end;
For the most part, it is deliverance.

> Sell intelligence and buy wonder:
> Intelligence is opinion, wonder is vision.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1402–7; cf. MJR4 pp.349–50*

In the *Maśnavī,* Rūmī depicts *Iblīs* as following the strictures of God's punishment – the assignment to test and tempt men – with unwavering devotion to his beloved God. Indeed, *Iblīs* claims that even his disobedience stemmed only from love. In his love of God, he was unwilling to worship any but God, including Adam, even when God commanded it. He would worship none but the one God, no matter what the penalty. In fact, God gave him no alternative. In the story as retold by Rūmī, *Iblīs* says:

> During the short while
> since He drove me from His presence,
> my eye has remained (fixed) on His beauteous face;
> (And my thought has always been),
> "Such wrath from such a face! O wonderful!"
> (whereas) every one (else) has become occupied
> with the cause (His wrath)....
>
> I grant that my declining to worship (Adam) was from envy;
> (Yet) that envy arose from love (of God),
> not from denial (of God's supremacy).
> 'Tis certain, all envy arises from love,
> (for fear) lest another become the companion of the beloved.
> Brooding jealousy is the necessary consequence of love,
> just as saying "Live long!" follows a sneeze.
> Since there was no play but this on His board,
> and He said, "Play!", what more could I do?
> I played the one play that there was,
> and cast myself into woe.
> But even in woe, I am tasting His delights;
> I am mated by Him, mated by Him, mated by Him!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2638–39, 2642–47; cf. MJR2 p.357–58*

Mystics, it would seem, adopt a pragmatic point of view; they make use of the stories and allegories that exist within their own culture to put across the fundamental truths of the spiritual path. The mythology surrounding *Iblīs* as a personification of the devil is no exception. Traditional followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all believe in the existence of a devil, and have placed him in a variety of legendary and mythological settings. Yet, mystics say that the real devil is within one's self, and his task is to weave

the web of illusion and multiplicity around the inner essence of the soul, so that the attention is distracted or tempted by what lies without, rather than what lies within.

Temptation, then, is not something which happens to a person from time to time, but is a continuous state of being. Every individual lives in a continually distracted state because of the devil who lives within, who – according to a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of Muḥammad) – "runs in man like blood in the veins".[7] This is truly a very clever devil. In fact, conceptions of the devil as some external agency are themselves the concoctions of the devil, diverting the attention from the real source of the problem and the devil's real nature.

All negative human tendencies, many of which are subconscious, are therefore 'of the devil'. For this reason, traditional Islam lists a number of characteristics by which it may be ascertained that a person has succumbed to the temptations of *Iblīs*. From a more general point of view, however, they are simply characteristics of human weakness understood by any human society or religion. Cyril Glassé provides an excellent summary of them:

> Among the traditional signs of 'dark spirits' are the following: first, that they say the opposite of the truth; second, that they deny their own faults and attribute them to others, preferably to someone who is completely innocent; third, that they continually change their position in an argument, the purpose of the argument being only to subvert, to turn aside from truth and goodness; fourth, that they exaggerate the evil of what is good, and the good of what is evil, that is, they define good as evil because of a shadow of imperfection, and evil as good because of a reflection of perfection; they glorify a secondary quality in order to deny an essential one, or to disguise a fundamental flaw; in short, they completely falsify true proportions and invert normal relations.
>
> *Cyril Glassé, Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, CEI p.166*

There is some debate in Islam as to whether *Iblīs* is the same as *Shayṭān*. The *Qur'ān* is not specific. While *Iblīs* is the one who refuses to bow down to Adam, at Adam's creation, *Shayṭān* is always the tempter of Adam and humanity. But either way, the roles of *Shayṭān* and *Iblīs* clearly overlap, sharing the same mythological roots.

See also: **devil**, **jinn** (4.2), **Shayṭān**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:1014, *MJR2* p.57.
2. *Qur'ān* 17:64.
3. *Qur'ān* 39:23; *cf. Qur'ān* 28:56, 16:39.

4. *Qur'ān* 38:82.
5. R.A. Nicholson, *Commentary on Maśnavī* III:4060, *MJR8* p.102.
6. *Qur'ān* 111:5.
7. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 4:54.501, in *MJR7* p.260.

Jam (H/Pu) See **Yama**.

Jam Rāj, **Jam Rāi** (H/Pu) See **Yama Rāja**.

Judge An official with the authority to hear cases in a court of law, to pronounce judgment, and to mete out sentence, if appropriate; generally used in spiritual literature for the negative power, the devil or a lesser ruler; the source of the law of cause and effect and the automatic dispensation of justice or judgment; sometimes, also, the supreme Lord, as the ultimate Mover in all things.

Just as a judge has the last word in any court over which he presides, so too is God the ultimate will that prevails throughout His creation. The supreme Lord, however, is all mercy and love, while the negative power administers his realms through the law of judgment. In Christian teachings, it is clear that Jesus understood this law. As he advises:

> Judge not, that ye be not judged.
> For with what judgment ye judge,
> ye shall be judged:
> And with what measure ye mete,
> it shall be measured to you again.
> *Matthew 7:1–2, KJV*

Or more specifically, but in metaphors:

> Agree with thine adversary quickly,
> whiles thou art in the way with him;
> Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
> and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
> and thou be cast into prison.
> Verily I say unto thee,
> thou shalt by no means come out thence,
> till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.
> *Matthew 5:25–26, KJV*

Here, the "adversary" is the devil, the prison is this world, while the "judge" and "officer" are general references to the intervening powers that govern rebirth and destiny. This is not a new interpretation. The second-century Church father, Irenaeus, writes of a gnostic group known to him as the Carpocratians who said that the "adversary" is the devil; the "judge" is the chief of the "world-building powers", that is, an agent of the negative power concerned with the administration of the physical universe; the "officer" is the power who oversees the formation of a new body; and the "prison" is the body itself. In this instance, the devil or Satan is thus perceived as the ruler of this world, and the teaching is credited to Jesus.[1] A similar interpretation is found in the gnostic text, the *Pistis Sophia.*[2]

The idea of this world as a prison or a tomb, governed by a stern and merciless "Judge", who is other than the merciful Father, is also found in the *Second Apocalypse of James:*

> My God and my Father,
> who saved me from this dead hope,
> who made me alive
> through a mystery of what He wills,
> do not let my days in this world be prolonged....
> Deliver me from this place of sojourn!
> Do not let Your grace be left behind in me,
> but may Your grace become pure!
>
> Save me from evil death!
> Bring me from a tomb alive,
> because Your grave – love – is alive in me
> to accomplish a work of fullness!
> Save me from sinful flesh,
> because I trusted in You with all my strength!
>
> Because You are the life of the Life,
> save me from a humiliating Enemy!
> Do not give me into the hand of a Judge
> who is severe with sin!
>
> Forgive me all my debts of days (gone by)!
> Because I am alive in You,
> Your grace is alive in me.
> I have renounced everyone,
> but have affirmed my belief in You.
> Save me from evil affliction!

But now is the time and the hour:
O Holy Spirit, send me salvation.

Second Apocalypse of James 62–63; cf. NHS11 pp.144–49

See also: **Dharma Rāj**.

1. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I:25.4, *AH1* pp.95–96.
2. *Pistis Sophia* 295:113; *cf. PS* pp.590–93.

Kāl(a) (S/H/Pu), **Kāl Nirañjan**, **Kāl Purush**, **Kāl Purakh** (Pu) *Lit.* lord *(nirañjan, purush, purakh)* of time *(Kāl); kāl* means time and, thus, by extension, death, destruction. *Kāl* is also an epithet of the mythological *Yama*, the lord of death, the king of the dead, the lord of *dharma* (justice); from the Sanskrit root, *kala* (to count, to calculate), from which comes *kāla* (he who calculates). *Kāl Nirañjan* and *Kāl Purakh* are terms used respectively by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh and in the *Ādi Granth*.

Depicted in various ways in Indian religious and mystical texts, *Kāla* first appears as a deity in the *Atharva Veda*, where he is the cause and ruler of all things, a role consistent with his being the personification of time:

It is he *(Kāla)* who caused the worlds
to come into being and holds them.
He is the father of all things:
there is no power greater than him.

Kāla created the heavenly spheres.
Kāla also made the terrestrial spheres.
Truly, in *Kāla* is established, in various forms,
all that was created in the past,
and all that shall be created in the future
and all that presently exists.

Kāla has created the universe, in *Kāla* does the sun rise;
All creatures live in *Kāla:*
truly, in *Kāla* alone do all creatures have their being....

Stirred by him, created by him,
the universe is firmly established in him alone.
Kāla alone, being *Brahmā,* the mighty one,
sustains the vast universe.

Atharva Veda 19:53.4–6, 9; cf. HAV2 p.310, VE pp.217–18

In the *Maitrī Upanishad*, echoing the *Atharva Veda*, *Kāla* (Time) is reverenced as *Brahman*, from which all things flow and grow, and into which all things return. He who understands that *Kāla* is *Brahman* rises above the level of *Kāla*:

> Whoever reverences *Kāla* as *Brahman*, from him *Kāla* withdraws afar. For thus it has been said:
>
> "From *Kāla* flow forth created things;
> From *Kāla*, too, they advance to growth.
> In *Kāla*, too, they disappear;
> *Kāla* is a form, and formless, too."
>
> *Maitrī Upanishad 6:14; cf. TPU p.434*

The *Maitrī Upanishad* also says that there are two forms of *Brahman* – *Kāla* (Time) and *Akāla* (Timeless) – the manifest creation and the unmanifest absolute Reality. Symbolizing the creation as the "sun", the writer says that before creation only "*Akāla*" exists – undifferentiated, without form. "*Kāla*" is inherent in the "sun", in the creation:

> There are, assuredly, two forms of *Brahman*:
> *Kāla* (Time) and *Akāla* (Timeless).
> That which is prior to the sun is *Akāla*,
> without parts *(akala)*.
> But that which begins with the sun is *Kāla*,
> which has parts *(kala)*.
>
> *Maitrī Upanishad 6:15; cf. TPU p.434*

In the *Bhāgavata* and the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Kāla* is depicted as a manifested aspect of the creator-god, *Brahmā*. In the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, *Kāla* is likewise an emanated form of *Brahmā*:

> He, that *Brahmā*, was all things; comprehending in His own nature the manifest and unmanifest. He then existed in the form of *Purusha* (spirit) and of *Kāla*. *Purusha* is the first form of the Supreme; next proceeded two other forms, the manifest and unmanifest; and *Kāla* was the last.
>
> *Vishṇu Purāṇa 1:2; cf. VP p.8*

All things being subject to time and death, *Kāla* is also portrayed as the destructive principle in creation. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, he is referred to as *Kāla* the Destroyer.[1] In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Kṛishṇa, speaking to Arjuna on the

eve of battle, identifies himself in universal form with everything in creation, including *Kāla:*

> I am the mighty world-destroying *Kāla,*
> engaged here in slaying these men.
> Even without you, not one of all the warriors
> arrayed in these rival armies will survive.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 11:32; cf. BGT*

All things in this world are subject to time *(kāl),* and time implies change. Hence, 'Ināyat Khān writes of the relationship of time to change, destruction and death:

> As all things are subject to change, no one thing is the same as it was a moment before, although the change may not be noticeable, for only a definite change is perceptible. In a flower, there is the change from bud to blossom, and in a fruit from the unripe to the ripe state. Even stones change, and some among them have been known to become perceptibly altered even in the course of twenty-four hours.
>
> Time has a great influence upon all things and beings, as may be seen by the change from infancy to youth, and from middle age to old age. In Sanskrit, therefore, time is called *kāla* which means destruction, as no change is possible without destruction; in other words destruction may be described as change. All things natural and artificial that we see today differ vastly in their form from what they were several thousand years ago, and not only can this be noticed in such things as fruit, flowers, birds and animals, but also in the human race; for, from time to time, the structure of man has undergone various changes.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK2 pp.40–41*

A number of Indian Saints have spoken of *Kāl*'s dominion over the souls of this world:

> The entire world is in the power of Death *(Kāl),*
> and is bound to duality.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 162, MMS*

> Even great ascetics and very wise men
> were all deluded by the deception of *Kāl.*
> Had only a few been mistaken,
> someone could have explained the truth to them.
> But what can be said,
> when the whole world is deluded?
>
> *Dariyā Sāhib, Gyān Ratna, Chaupaī 1624–25, DG2 p.224; cf. DSSB p.117*

The merchant's goods have gone
  to the house of the thief;
Likewise, in this world,
  souls have fallen into the hands of *Kāl.*

Dariyā Sāhib, Vivek Sāgar, VS p.18; cf. DSSB p.119

He alone is a *mullā,* who struggles with his mind,
  and by the *Guru's* instruction contends with Death *(Kāl).*
He who crushes the pride of the death's courier (*Kāl Purkh,* lord of death),
  unto that *mullā,* I ever make a salutation.

Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1159, MMS

In these instances, the term is being used in a general sense. The nineteenth-century mystics, Tulsī Sāhib (c.1763–1843) and Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh (1818–1878), however, and the Masters following them during the twentieth century, have been more specific. They have identified *Kāl,* the personification of time, death and justice, as the lord or ruler of the second spiritual region *(trikuṭī),* the ruler of the worlds of the mind. In this sense, *Kāl* is the power that created and continuously administers the worlds of the mind: the physical universe, the astral region *(sahans dal kanwal)* and the causal region *(trikuṭī).* The sublime region of *trikuṭī* has also been identified by these Saints with *Brahm,* the *Brahman* of the *Upanishads:*

> *Kāl* is not only the lord of this physical world, but of all the worlds below and above and surrounding it, up to *trikuṭī.* His technical Hindu name is *Brahm.* He rules over *trikuṭī* and *sahans dal kanwal* and all the regions below them. He is with every creature in the shape of mind.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 120, SG p.177*

Kāl, however, is simply fulfilling the role allotted to him by the Supreme, keeping all souls within the realm of birth and death:

> The entire creation – the regions, islands, nether worlds, and everything that exists – has been created by the Supreme Being, and it is He who has entrusted its administration to *Kāl. Kāl's* authority reaches up to the level of *Brahm,* (extending) throughout the realm of the three worlds. Whatever comes within his sphere is caught in the pain of death and rebirth.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Spiritual Discourses 2:4, SD2 p.159*

The Masters following Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, especially Mahārāj Sāwan Singh (1858–1948) and Mahārāj Charan Singh (1916–1990) have described

the role of *Kāl* in some detail. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes that *Kāl* is the negative power in creation as opposed to the positive power, the Creator. And while the law of *Kāl* is that of strict justice, the law of *karma*, the law of the positive power is that of mercy, forgiveness and love. Indian mystics therefore call Him, *Dayāl* (the merciful One):

> The supreme Lord is self-existent and self-sustaining. He is the Cause of all. He is neither real nor non-real. He is beyond them both. He cannot be reached by mind or speech. That which was and is, is neither darkness nor light. There was motion in Him, which we can describe as a wave. By this wave both the true Lord *(Sat Purush*, the positive power) and the negative power *(Kāl Purush)* were born. From the negative power the (lower) creation originated. He has two powers, namely time and space. These provide the warp and woof of the creation. Space helps in spreading the creation, and time is ever bringing about changes.
>
> The cycle of eighty-four (*chaurāsī*, the cycle of transmigration) is under the negative power *(Kāl)*. All the lower regions ... which people try to reach after death by doing meritorious deeds and giving alms and charities and so forth, are under the governance of *Kāl*. These regions are not everlasting or imperishable, but are destroyed after an allotted period....
>
> The negative power *(Kāl)* and the true Lord have their own spheres of work. *Kāl* creates nether worlds and upper worlds, sustains them, and then destroys them. *Kāl* is comprised of the past, present and future. The four ages or *yugas* are its revolutions; and years, months, days, hours and seconds are its divisions....
>
> There is another power above *Kāl* which is described as *Akāl* by the Masters in the line of Guru Nānak. *Akāl* connotes eternity, and this power possesses the qualities of the 'eternal now' and unchangeable permanence. Time has nothing to do with it. It is beyond time and space. Because this power has no connection with *Kāl*, it is beyond the count of seconds, minutes, days, years and ages. They all merge in His eternal existence....
>
> Kabīr Sāhib says in *Anurāg Sāgar* that the power of *Kāl* originated from *Sat Purush* and spread downwards from *sach khaṇḍ* (true region). *Kāl*, however, is not allowed to go to *sach khaṇḍ*. This means that *Kāl* cannot penetrate into the sphere of *Akāl*. *Akāl* is real. *Kāl* is merely his reflection. The reflection is sustained by the original. Just as the moon receives light from the sun and is illuminated by it, similarly *Kāl* is sustained by *Akāl*. *Kāl* is an activated shadow of *Akāl*. The world is sustained by him. The *Vedas* and other Hindu scriptures consider this 'Shadow Being'[2] to be the all-in-all and the highest

power. But he is described by the Saints as *Kāl Purush* or the negative power....

Saints believe that the Lord or Master or Creator has limitless consciousness. He is the positive power. He is an unfathomable ocean of love and bliss. He has many powers or agents who look after the creation and its maintenance. These are described as beings or *purushas*. The supreme Lord is accordingly called the Supreme Being or *Param Purush*. Amongst these powers is the negative power, or *Kāl Purush*, who is the creator of the universe. The duration of his universe is limited, after which it must suffer dissolution. Therefore, he is called the lord of time or *Kāl Purush*. He is the sustainer of all the worlds of the three attributes. There are numberless universes. Each universe is looked after by a ruler appointed by the Supreme Being. Each ruler has three forces or gods (the three *guṇas*) – *Brahmā* the creator, *Vishṇu* the sustainer, and *Shiva* the destroyer. These create, sustain and destroy a universe. All these rulers are parts of *Kāl Purush*, who is himself sustained by the timeless Lord *(Akāl Purush)*. All this lower creation is within the power of *Kāl*.

Both *Kāl* and *Akāl* were created by the supreme Lord. The work of creation and its evolution has been handed over to them....

The Saints have also described the supreme Lord as the Most Merciful.... The distinction between *Kāl* and *Dayāl* (the negative power and the merciful One) is very abstruse and merits careful study. The Saints hint at it, and their writings should be studied.

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.72–77

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh also taught that the universal mind is reflected as the individual human mind. This human mind is consequently the agent of *Kāl*, the negative power:

Individual mind is *Kāl* on a small scale. It is *Kāl*'s agent, attached to every soul to keep it out from the eye focus and keep it entangled in this world. No individual is at peace with himself and no one is happy. In ignorance, doubt and fear, men go about. When such is the case of the individual, the case of groups of such individuals and nations cannot be expected to be any better. The world is a plaything of *Kāl*.

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 116, SG p.164

It is for this reason that all the strife and turmoil in the world, as well as the good and the constructive, all come through the agency of the individual mind; for *Kāl* is also interested in keeping a balance of good and evil, so that his creation remains a tolerable place. Good and evil are both aspects of duality, and thus of the mind, while the Lord is beyond all differentiation,

beyond all good or bad. Even so, *Kāl* receives his power and his instructions, so to speak, from the supreme Lord:

> *Kāl* or *Dharam Rāi* administers as he is directed to by the far higher true Being *(Sat Purush)*, and he is not the creator of the soul. He can neither create nor destroy a soul. It is only the body that belongs to Him. He assigns a body according to individual *karmas*, and takes it back after the allotted span is over. He has no control over the soul, because souls are the children of the true Being *(Sat Purush)*, and are immortal....
>
> The main work of the negative power is to allow no one to escape from its domain. He has, as if by magic and deceit, obtained control over all living beings. We have forgotten our original home, and we are now destined to wander from door to door.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.69, 74*

For a soul lost and entangled in the web of illusion created by *Kāl*, the only way out is through the one power which sustains all creation – the primal vibration of the Creative Word. And the only way to contact that power is through a human being who is himself a personification of that power – a perfect living Master. Nevertheless, no soul can leave the domain of *Kāl* until he has accounted for all karmic debts of the past, accumulated in countless past lives – something which can only be accomplished through the forgiveness or cleansing power of the Creative Word and its manifestation in a living Master or *Satguru:*

> *Kāl* does not wish that anyone should go out of his domain, because the life and gaiety of this creation is due to the souls that are in it. He accordingly misleads the souls in a variety of ways by means of the mind and *māyā*. For this reason the true Being or true Lord sends his incarnations, the Saints and Masters, from time to time, to emancipate those who are in the clutches of delusion. Without taking refuge in such Saints, one is not freed from the bondage of death....
>
> Those who have not met a *Satguru* are in the power of *Kāl*. One cannot escape from the clutches of *Kāl* except by serving a true Master....
>
> *Kāl* demands from everybody an account of all actions, and in accordance with them he metes out punishments or rewards. Recitals, penances, continence, reading, writing, and the three *guṇas* (qualities) are all within his sphere. The only way to transcend them is the practice of the *Shabd Dhun,* or the divine Melody, and taking shelter with a true Master. But it is only the highly fortunate few who take shelter with the Master, and thus escape the clutches of *Kāl*.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.69, 78–79*

The role of *Kāl*, then, is to confine souls in his domain through the law of *karma*. The role of the Saints is to free these souls:

> From *trikuṭī* down to the vegetable kingdom is the sphere of *Kāl*, in which all souls rotate according to their *karma*. The ruler of the circle is *Kāl*, who wishes to confine all these souls to his own domain, taking care not to let them go out of his own sphere, so that the latter may not become depopulated.
>
> When *Sat Purush*, from whom all these souls had emanated, found them in trouble, He sent His Saints from *sach khaṇḍ* to initiate these souls in His path. Saints are always present in this world. Their mission is to take the soul from the sphere of *Kāl* to *sach khaṇḍ*. They do not meddle with the religions of the world. Their teaching is the same for all; namely, to make the soul attend to the holy Sound, as the current of Sound comes direct from the Supreme Being. Therefore, Sound is the direct route to *sach khaṇḍ*.
>
> As, by degrees, the mind and soul become enamoured of the Sound, the latter will burn out all our impurities and make them pure. When pure, they will be attracted by the Sound and will begin to ascend inwards. At last, when both reach *trikuṭī*, the mind will become one with *Brahm*. It was generated from this region, and will merge into it. Then the soul, having separated from the mind, will go to the region of *daswān dwār* (*lit.* tenth door) and find itself free from all diseases as well as from the sphere of *Kāl*. Then *Satguru* will, by degrees, take it to *sach khaṇḍ*. Therefore, the only way to go out of this world and leave the sphere of *Kāl* is by listening to the holy Sound and having love for the *Satguru*.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 140, SG pp.200–1*

The highest human aspiration, therefore, is to control or still the mind and – with the help of the divine creative power and a Master – to rise above the regions of *Kāl*:

> While living within the sphere of *Kāl*, we have to still the mind and, with the power of the Lord's Name obtained from the Master, we have to rise above *Kāl*'s domain, to the regions where both *Kāl* and *māyā* become powerless and ineffective....
>
> The transient world is all the creation of *Kāl*. But to one taking refuge in the Lord, *Kāl* can do no harm. The eternal Sound or Melody is the manifestation of the positive power. By practising it, one transcends the limits of *Kāl*. Wherever there is the melody of the *Shabd* or the Sound Current, *Kāl* cannot interfere, and he keeps away from there....

> At the last moment of life, the lord of death or *Kāl* does not come to take away the disciple of the true Master. The Master himself comes and takes the soul with Him. *Kāl* does not come near a devotee.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 4, PM4 pp.73, 77–78*

See also: **Dayāl** (2.1), **Dharma Rāj**, **Mahā Kāl** (4.2), **negative power**, **Yama**.

1. *Rāmāyaṇa* 3:7.9.
2. *Chhāyā Purusha*, a term used in the *Tantras*.

leader of the darkness The negative power; used in the Manichaean psalms. A devotee, for instance, prays for help to the *Nous*, the divine Intelligence or Word:

> O *Nous*, … the gatherer of them that are his, …
> subdue the leader of the darkness who has seized me.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.152*

lion, lion-faced power A gnostic epithet for *Yaldabaoth*, the Demiurge who creates and rules this world, as well as some of the realms above. The lion and the lion-faced power are names which would have been familiar to Middle Eastern minds, since many of the pagan and especially Egyptian gods were depicted with the heads of wild beasts. The expression appears in the *Gospel of Thomas* as a saying attributed to Jesus:

> Cursed is the man whom the lion consumes.
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 33:7, NHS20 pp.56–57*

The metaphor is also associated with the gnostic myth concerning the enslavement of Wisdom in matter.[1] Thus, in the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, the creation of the negative power is described in mythological terms as being formed from the "matter" which comes into being in the lower realms of creation:

> A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below; and shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that shadow became matter; and that shadow was projected apart.… And it assumed a plastic form, moulded out of shadow, and became an arrogant beast resembling a lion.
>
> *Hypostasis of the Archons 22:94, NHS20 pp.252–53*

In the *Pistis Sophia,* Wisdom (personified as the errant *Pistis Sophia*) attempts to merge with this "lion-faced power" because his form of light is enticing, resembling that of the true Light, only to discover too late that she has not the power to do so. Subsequently, she begs the true Lord, the "Light of lights", to help her, because

> the lion-faced power took away my inner light.
> *Pistis Sophia 47:32, PS pp.94–95; cf. PSGG p.37*

In another place, she prays:

> You (Lord) will save me
> as I am ensnared by this lion-faced power;
> For you are my Saviour.
> *Pistis Sophia 86:47; cf. PS pp.172–73, PSGG p.70*

The metaphor is also encountered in Judaic texts, including *Esther* (in her prayer)[2] and the biblical *Psalms.*[3] In the *Pistis Sophia,* her final conquest over the negative power is described as:

> She trampled upon the emanation … with a lion-face.
> *Pistis Sophia 141:66, PS pp.282–83; cf. PSGG p.118*

And this is immediately equated with the meaning of a verse in one of the psalms:

> You (Lord) will tread upon the serpent and basilisk,
> and You will trample upon the lion and dragon.
> *Pistis Sophia 143:67; cf. PS pp.286–87; cf. Psalm 91:13*

The metaphor also appears in the pseudo-epigraphic *1 Peter,* where the unknown writer advises:

> Be sober, be vigilant; because your Adversary the devil,
> as a roaring lion, walketh about,
> seeking whom he may devour.
> *1 Peter 5:8, KJV*

Likewise in *2 Timothy,* the writer says:

> I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
> *2 Timothy 4:17, KJV*

Human passions and imperfections were also commonly described as wild beasts or lions, attempting to devour the soul.[4] Metaphorically, the king of these passions is the devil. Consequently, the king of the passions – when they are depicted as wild animals – is the lion, the king of beasts. Thus, in the allegorical story of *Joseph and Aseneth,* Aseneth – who symbolizes the soul – prays for spiritual help because the "wild primeval lion pursues me":

> Just as a little child who is afraid,
> runs to his father and mother …
> so also, Lord, do You stretch out your arms around me
> like a father who loves his child,
> and snatch me up from the lion.
>
> For behold, the wild primeval lion pursues me,
> for he is the father of the gods of the Egyptians,
> and the gods of idol fanatics are his children.
> And I have rejected (*lit.* come to hate) them,
> because they are the lion's children,
> and I have cast all of them from me and destroyed them,
> and the lion (*var.* the devil) their father
> is trying to devour me.
>
> But You, O Lord, rescue me from his hands,
> and deliver me from his mouth,
> lest he snatch me up and tear me to pieces,
> and cast me into the fire of the furnace,
> and the fire cast me into the storm,
> and the storm envelop me in darkness
> and cast me into the depths of the sea,
> and the great sea monster who existed from the beginning
> should devour me, and I should perish forevermore.
>
> *Joseph and Aseneth 12; cf. AOT p.485, JA pp.41–42, OTP2 pp.221–22, UWOT pp.119–20*

The "wild primeval lion", the devil or negative power, pursues all souls, trying to "devour" them. They are devoured in the sense that they are engulfed and lost in the distractions of the senses and the imperfections of the mind. The "lion" is the father of all illusion and all false worship, whether they be the "gods of the Egyptians" or anything else. This "lion" is also "primeval" in the sense that God created him in the very beginning, and he has existed for as long as the creation.

Aseneth prays for the mercy and forgiveness of the true Lord to save her from the "lion". Otherwise, she says, she will be cast into the fiery "furnace",

the "storm" or the "darkness" of the physical universe. The material world is compared to a deep sea or abyss, and the devil is hence portrayed as a "great sea monster who existed from the beginning". Without the rescuing hand of the Lord, she fears that she will continue revolving "forevermore" in the labyrinth of the world.

As a metaphor, especially for strength and kingliness, the lion has of course been used in other contexts. The fourth Caliph, for example, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (*b.c.*600), cousin and son-in-law to Muḥammad, whom the Shi'ite Muslims regard as the first Sufi, is called the lion of God. Rūmī has also used the lion as a metaphor for God.[5]

See also: **wild animals** (▸2), **Yaldabaoth**.

1. *e.g. Pistis Sophia* 30–32, 35, 39, 47–48, 50, 52–55, 66–67, 75–78, 102 (in *e.g. PS* p.43, etc.); *Apocryphon of John* 10 (in *e.g. NHS33* p.61); *On the Origin of the World* 100 (in *e.g. NHS21* pp.34–35).
2. *Esther* 4:17k *ff.*, *JB* (not in *KJV*).
3. *cf. Psalms* 7:2, 10:9, 17:12, 22:13,21, 35:17, 57:4, 58:6, 91:13.
4. *e.g. Psalms*, as above; see also *GJ* (index: beasts, wild *or* savage).
5. *e.g.* Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:1153–56.

Māra (Pa) *Lit.* death, pestilence; in Buddhism, the lord of death, the Destroyer, the Evil One, the Tempter; the power which holds souls in bondage to this world. A few sayings attributed to Buddha in the *Dhammapada* provide an insight into the way he viewed *Māra*. *Māra*, for example, works through an undisciplined mind that seeks sensual pleasures:

As the wind uproots a weak tree,
so does *Māra* uproot one
who lives for sensual pleasures,
with senses uncontrolled, immoderate in eating,
lazy, and of low energy.

As the wind cannot overthrow a rocky mountain,
so is *Māra* unable to overthrow one
who is unmindful of pleasures,
with senses controlled, moderate in eating,
full of faith, and full of energy.

Dhammapada 1:7–8

Māra cannot touch those who are truly spiritual and have attained perfect wisdom or knowledge:

Māra finds no way into those possessed of virtue,
living in mindfulness *(appamāda),*
freed by perfect wisdom.

Dhammapada 4:14

Conquest of *Māra* is related to the understanding that the body and all of life is ephemeral, having no more reality than "froth" or a "mirage". Likening absorption in the illusion of *Māra* to the heedless gathering of flowers, Buddha says:

Knowing the body to be like froth,
realizing it to have the nature of a mirage,
break the flowery shafts of *Māra,*
and go where the king of death cannot see you.

As a vast flood sweeps away a sleeping village,
so does death carry off a man who gathers flowers,
his mind distracted.

While a man gathers flowers, his mind distracted,
Death *(Antaka)* overpowers him, his desires unsatisfied.

Dhammapada 4:3–5

The Buddha taught that his "Way" was the means of overcoming *Māra.* In another saying regarding the eightfold path of the *Dhamma,* he says:

This is the Way:
there is none other leading to pure revelation.
Follow this Way:
it will confound *Māra.*

Dhammapada 20:2

During the third century CE, the Iranian mystic Mānī explained the teachings of the Buddha as those of all Saviours who teach the practice of the Word, redeeming souls from the cycle of birth and death, and the negative power who rules this world. Adopting Buddhist terminology, a later Manichaean writer hence addresses Mānī as saving souls "who had gone astray", from the "dark hell" of this world and from the "evil-[doing] *Māra*":

You descended,
and attained truly incomparable Buddhahood.
You redeemed countless living beings,
and saved them from this dark hell.

You purged them of masterly cunning and deception,
and caused them to do good to others.
You became a guide and a leader
for those who had gone astray.
You saved them from the claws of the evil-[doing] *Māra*.

Manichaean Hymns 36–37; cf. in GSR pp.281–82

nafs al-kullīyah, al- (A), **nafs-i kull, nafs-i kullī** (P) *Lit.* the universal *(kullīyah)* soul or mind *(nafs);* also called *nafs al-ūlá* (A) or *nafs-i avval* (P); possibly, the universal mind of modern terminology. According to the probably tenth-century *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā (Journals of the Brotherhood of the Pure),* primary works of the gnostic *Ismā'īlīyah,* the Creator first created the Universal Intelligence *('Aql al-Kullī).* Next, from this Universal Intelligence, He created the *nafs al-kullīyah* (universal mind). From the *nafs al-kullīyah,* proceeded primal or original matter, which was transformed into secondary matter, which has spatial dimensions – *i.e.* length, breadth and height.

It is also said that, in the very beginning of things, four universal beings which are aspects of the Godhead were brought forth by God instantaneously by a series of effusions. Other beings were later brought into existence by the *nafs al-kullīyah,* acting with the permission of *Allāh.*

The *Journals* say that to find happiness in the world to come, the soul must disengage itself from the coarseness and impurities of matter, which weigh it down, and rediscover its own essential purity. After release from the body, the soul rises up through the heavenly regions and merges first into the *nafs al-kullīyah,* and then with *'Aql al-Kullī.* This ascent is guided by the *Imām* or spiritual leader:

> Know, brother, that the Creator, Most Exalted, created as the first thing from His light of Unity, the simple substance called the Active Intelligence *('Aql),* as two is generated from one by repetition. Then the universal mind *(nafs al-kullīyah)* was generated from the light of the Intelligence *('Aql)* as three is generated by adding unity to two. Then matter was generated.
>
> *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā 1:28; cf. in ICD p.46*

In the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā,* the teachings of past prophets and mystics are accepted as expressions of the essential spiritual realities, and the *Journals* are essentially a compendium of all the mystic teachings known to them.

Ibn Sīnā adopted this doctrine, making some refinements to it but, in his descriptions, *nafs al-kullīyah* remained a later effusion, after *'Aql al-Kullī.*

See also: **al-'Aql al-Kullī** (3.1), **nafs** (5.1), **al-nafs al-ūlá, universal mind**.

nafs al-ūlá, al- (A), **nafs-i avval** (P) *Lit.* the first *(ūlá, awwal)* soul *(nafs)*: the first *nafs;* also called *nafs al-kullīyah* (cosmic soul); a level of soul, according to Ibn Sīnā and others, created by and lower than the *'Aql al-Kullī* (Universal Intelligence, the creative Power), possibly equivalent to the universal mind of modern terminology; contrasted with the second soul *(nafs-i duvum)* which functions within each individual, drawing its power from the first soul *(nafs-i avval).*

However, there are places where *nafs-i avval* seems to refer to the divine creative power, as in Rūmī's *Maśnavī.*[1] In fact, in some of the original Persian texts of the *Maśnavī, nafs-i avval* and *nafs-i duvum* appear as *'Aql-i Avval* (Primal Intelligence) and *'aql-i duvum* (second intelligence).

See also: **nafs** (5.1), **al-nafs al-kullīyah**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:3077–80; *cf. MJR4* p.173.

negative power The force or power responsible for all duality, diversity and illusion within the realms of the mind; the ruler of the highest level of the greater mind; the universal mind; the ruler of the physical, astral and causal regions; the ruler of the realms of birth and death. A term first appearing in letters from Mahārāj Sāwan Singh to Western disciples during the early years of the twentieth century, where the negative power is equated with *Kāl,* the Indian lord of death, understood in a specifically mystic context. The expression was used extensively by Julian Johnson, a disciple of Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, in his books, *With a Great Master in India* and *The Path of the Masters.*

Speaking of the highest region of the mind as *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks), Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes:

> *Kāl* and the regent of *trikuṭī* are one and the same. From *trikuṭī* downward, this negative power becomes more active; and in the two regions above *trikuṭī,* it is less active. The power of the soul increases enormously in higher regions.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 202, SG p.331*

Speaking of the astral world as a creation of the negative power, he observes:

> It is not a permanent abode and not worth living in, but a place to be shunned, a design of the negative power to prevent the soul from going up. The whole astral plane is subject to the five passions, the same as the physical plane.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 198:16, SG p.316*

And of the spiritual struggle experienced in this world, he also speaks of "negative powers" – lesser powers within the rule of the "negative power":

> You ask why so many hindrances, when one is trying so hard to advance spiritually? Why so many things thrust themselves in to interfere with our best efforts to rise spiritually? There is but one answer – the dark or negative powers which manage most world affairs do not wish any soul to contact a *Satguru* (true Master) who can deliver that soul from the regions of the negative power. He wishes to keep everyone here. And although that negative power is under the supreme power, yet within his own territory, he has a certain degree of discretionary power. It is only when a soul comes in contact with a Saint or true *Satguru,* that he is assured of his complete deliverance from the regions of the negative powers. Of course, those powers will do all they can to keep a soul away from the *Satguru.* But, in that effort, the negative powers cannot succeed if one keeps his mind steadfast upon the *Guru* and persists in his determination to come to the *Guru.* If he does that, there is no power in the universe which can keep him away from the *Guru;* and when he is once initiated by the *Guru,* or even before that, when he has once entrusted his life to the *Guru,* then and after that the negative power has no more ability to defeat his efforts toward spiritual liberation.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 207, SG pp.339–40*

Probably all religions acknowledge the existence of a negative power, though the exact nature and role ascribed to this power varies. The Greek mystics spoke of Discord; the gnostics described the Demiurge; Christians and Jews speak of Satan or the devil; Zoroastrians talk of *Ahriman;* Muslims also speak of *Shayṭān* and *Iblīs;* Buddhists have *Māra* (lord of death); and Hindu mythology also includes a lord of death, known as *Yama, Kāla* or *Dharam Rāi.* No religion and few human beings would deny the existence of evil. There is therefore a puzzle: how could a God, who is commonly understood to be all love, condone or create the existence of that which men call evil, or experience as suffering?

Either there is an evil power, separate from God – in which case there is a fundamental dualism in the universe through the presence of a power who is both independent of and opposed to God – or, there is only one supreme power or God, and somehow, though He is all love, He is also responsible for the apparent existence of evil and suffering.

Over the ages, theologians and philosophers have presented every conceivable intellectual answer to this conundrum. Often, the answers suggest that God has granted free will to His creatures, thereby making them – not Himself – responsible for their actions and consequent suffering. For many,

this is a neat solution; but it suggests that God has intentionally permitted part of His creation to get out of His control, which seems illogical. In any case, such answers are only intellectual, not based on direct perception or experience of the reality. They therefore fall into the category of speculation or guesswork.

Mystics, on the other hand, speak from direct experience of Reality, and many of them talk – in one way or another – of both a negative and a positive power. But they also point out that the negative power is a creation of the positive power, acting at all times under His jurisdiction. He is like the president of a jail who may appear to have full authority, yet is actually constrained to act within the framework of certain laws, deriving his authority entirely from the president or ruling body of the country.

In more metaphysical language, they say that the Lord is the one supreme power and Reality, the inner essence of all being, while the negative power is the architect of all diversity. Time and space, change and rhythm, relativity and association, duality and all the pairs of opposites, good and evil, birth and death, in fact everything which makes up the fabric of physical existence, are the creation of the negative power. But the primal power within it all is the one power and presence of God. The negative power takes the ever present, self-existent Reality of the One and, through the consent of the One and by the power of the One, weaves a subtle and entangling web over the face of that One.

The negative power is thus the weaver of delusion, deception and illusion, making things seem to be that which they are not. Time, perhaps, is the greatest deluder of all, for souls are kept on a treadmill, endlessly chasing a mirage of the future which never comes. From time arises desire – desire for the satisfaction of something in the future. There can be no desire if there is no time and, by that desire, all souls are bound. Similarly, action requires both time and space. Moreover, souls in this world are bound to act – and are then bound by the results of their actions. This is the law of *karma,* the law that keeps souls bound within the realm of birth and death.

See also: **Kāl**.

prince of this world, prince of the power of the air Satan or the devil as the instigator of all sin in the material world; as Jesus says in John's gospel:[1]

> This Voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.
> Now is the judgment of this world:
>   now shall the prince of this world be cast out.
>
> *John 12:30–31, KJV*

Similarly, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he is clearly speaking of the devil when he writes:

> And you hath he (Christ) quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air – the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
>
> *Ephesians 2:1–2, KJV*

Paul demonstrates in his writings that he is familiar with gnostic terminology, and the "prince of the power of the air" possibly refers to the "prince" or ruler of the causal realm, the highest of the worlds within the domain of the negative power. An allied term the "body of air" is described in the *Untitled Text* of the *Bruce Codex* as one of the subtle garments of the soul, seeming most likely to be equivalent to the causal body.[2] If the "prince of the power of the air" and the "body of air" come from the same system of terminology, then the prince of the power of the air would mean the ruler or *archon* who governs the causal realm – that is, the devil or negative power. This, at any rate, is Paul's meaning.

See also: **Beelzebub**.

1. See also *John* 14:30, 16:11.
2. *Untitled Text* 256:16, *BC* pp.274–75.

Saklas (Am) *Lit.* fool; one of the three names commonly given to the negative power as the creator of the lower realms of creation in the gnostic myth of *Pistis Sophia,* the others being *Sama'el* and *Yaldabaoth. Saklas* appears in the *Apocalypse of Adam* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians,*[1] and is identified with *Sama'el* and *Yaldabaoth* in the *Trimorphic Protennoia,* the *Hypostasis of the Archons* and the *Apocryphon of John.*[2]

See also: **Sama'el, Yaldabaoth.**

1. *Apocalypse of Adam* 74, *Gospel of the Egyptians* 57–58.
2. *Trimorphic Protennoia* 39, *NHS28* pp.410–11; *Hypostasis of the Archons* 87:2, 94:23, 95:26, *NHS20* pp.234–35, 252–55; *Apocryphon of John* 11, *NHS33* p.71.

Sama'el (He) *Lit.* blind god; from the Hebrew *El* (God) and the Aramaic *sama* (blind); one of the three names often used for the negative power as the

creator of the lower realms of creation, the others being *Yaldabaoth* and *Saklas* (Fool). *Sama'el* is generally depicted as being unaware of his lower position in the hierarchy of creation. He is blind to his Creator, thinking that he himself is supreme. Hence:

> Their chief is blind; because of his power and his ignorance and his arrogance he said, with his power, "It is I who am God; there is none apart from me."
>
> *Hypostasis of the Archons 86:2, NHS20 pp.234–35*

It is from this blindness that the gnostics derived his name:

> When he said this, he sinned against [the entirety]. And this speech rose up to Incorruptibility; then there was a voice that came forth from Incorruptibility, saying, "You are mistaken, *Sama'el*" – which is, 'god of the blind'.
>
> *Hypostasis of the Archons 86–87:2; cf. NHS20 pp.234–35*

Or again:

> When *Pistis* saw the impiety of the chief ruler she was filled with anger. She was invisible. She said, "You are mistaken, *Sama'el,*" that is, 'blind god'. "There is an immortal Man of Light who has been in existence before you, and who will appear among your modelled (reflected) forms; he will trample you to scorn just as potter's clay is pounded. And you will descend to your mother, the abyss, along with those that belong to you. For at the consummation of your works, the entire defect (*i.e.* the lower creation) that has become visible (manifested) out of the Truth will be abolished, and it will cease to be, and will be as if it had never been."
>
> *On the Origin of the World 103:25; cf. NHS21 pp.40–43*

Sama'el is the most common name for Satan in Talmudic times (C5th–6th CE), appearing as the prime enemy of the angel Michael. In one of the legends, *Sama'el* takes the form of the serpent to tempt Adam, and in later literature he is depicted as bringing the poison of death into the world. In the Kabbalah, he and his wife, *Lilith,* the night demon, are portrayed as the rulers of the world of evil, although *Lilith* is not always mentioned by name.

See also: **Lilith** (4.2).

Satan (He. *Satan*) *Lit.* one who plots against; one who opposes and obstructs; the Adversary; the devil of Jewish, Christian and Muslim belief; the tempter

of humanity; the ruler of hell and this world; from the Hebrew *satan* (to plot against); a term whose meaning has changed over time.

Satan means adversary. In some places, it is used for a human adversary in battle. In others, it refers to an angelic adversary – a messenger of God whose duty it is to obstruct some human activity.

The first biblical use of *satan* is in *Numbers,* in the story of the prophet Balaam. Against the wishes of God, the prophet decides to go with the princes of Moab. Balaam accordingly saddles his ass and rides off. God, however, is displeased:

> And God's anger burned because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way as an adversary *(le-satan)* against him.
>
> *Numbers 22:22, KB*

The angelic adversary, the *satan,* is doing God's bidding. According to the story, the ass sees the angel and refuses to proceed. Balaam, however, is unable to see the angel, and thinking that the ass is simply being stubborn, he beats it. At this, the ass is given the power of speech, and reprimands Balaam for his cruelty. Finally, the angel reveals himself to Balaam, and a thoroughly chastened Balaam at last pledges obedience to God's command!

In *1 Chronicles* (C6th BCE), a *satan* is blamed for David's decision to carry out a census of his people for the purpose of taxation, always a much-hated practice:

> And an adversary angel *(satan)* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.
>
> *1 Chronicles 21:1, KB*

It is in *Job* (C6th BCE) where *Satan* first appears as a particular character. Here, his task is as the tempter and tester of humanity. He is also a co-worker with God:

> Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, "Where are you coming from?"
>
> And Satan answered the Lord, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."
>
> And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without cause."

> And Satan answered the Lord, and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has will he give for his life. But put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse You to Your face."
>
> And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; but spare his life."
>
> So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife to him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God, and die."
>
> But he said to her, "You speak like one of the foolish women speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
>
> *Job 2:1–10, JCL*

The Book of Job is essentially a short story concerning the wealthy and devout Job, and the trials and tribulations sent to him by God, through Satan, to test his faith in the ultimate goodness of divine providence. Despite moments of despair, the taunts of his wife and the advice of his 'comforters', Job manages to maintain his faith, which is ultimately vindicated. Job even accepts the activities of Satan as the will of God. The expressions, "the patience of Job" and "Job's comforters" have arisen from this story.

In the second century BCE, Jewish society was split into several distinct groups: the priestly class and its allies, who were trying to move the community into greater tolerance and acceptance of Greek culture; the Pharisees, who saw their role as maintaining Jewish religious purity and integrity; and the Essenes and other radical groups, who were even more particular about religious practices than the Pharisees.

The belief in Satan, evil powers and fallen angels was common, sometimes appearing in stories of cosmic battles between the good and evil angels, which directly symbolized the deep divisions in the community. Two strictly religious texts of the period, the *Book of the Watchers* and *Jubilees,* both incorporated into *1 Enoch,* characterize the righteous as aligned to the good angels, and their opponents as seduced by the powers of evil, personalized as Satan.

Other groups attributed the dominance of the forces of evil in the world to the Greek influence on Jewish culture as well as the deep divisions among the Jews in response to their oppression by Roman rulers. *The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness,* a first-century BCE text from the Dead Sea Scrolls associated with the religious community at Qumran, presents an apocalyptic vision of the powers of good battling against the powers of darkness, personalized as *Beliar, Satan* and *Mastema* (*lit.* hatred).

By the time of the Christian gospels, Satan had become the negative force in human life, also called the devil, Evil One, the prince of this world, the prince of darkness, the Adversary, the Enemy, the Wicked One, the Wolf, the Serpent, the strong man and by other epithets and metaphors. Most of these were not names of Jesus' invention, but had been used previously by others. In fact, the gospel writers use the various names according to their own particular inclination. Thus, for instance, in the parable of the sower, Mark has Jesus refer to Satan, Matthew calls him the Wicked One, and Luke speaks of the devil.

Although there is little doubt that Jesus taught the existence of Satan, very little is recorded in the gospels of his teachings concerning the devil's nature, origins and how he functions in this world. He is simply mentioned by Jesus, here and there. It is not surprising, therefore, that the early Christian fathers had no fixed teaching on the subject, and opinions varied. Later Christian teaching is also somewhat confused, and people's ideas concerning Satan are also much at variance. Satan is commonly described as a 'fallen angel' who disobeyed God, for example. Yet there is no support for this among the sayings of Jesus, nor does it explain the processes by which Satan influences human thought and behaviour, or why God is seemingly so unable or unwilling to control him. The matter therefore remains pretty much of a mystery and many theologians, ancient and modern, have altogether avoided discussion of the devil's actual nature as too much of an embarrassment to rationality.

The Christian concept of the devil or Satan is essentially that of a being who is entirely dark and evil. He is envisaged primarily as the ever present tempter of humanity in this world, and as the ruler of hell where souls are punished and burnt for their sins.

The gnostics of early Christian times spoke of Satan as the ruler of this world, but they taught that he was acting under the aegis of the Demiurge or creator-god. Thus, perhaps in deference to Jewish and early Christian belief, gnostics of the Valentinian school differentiated between the Demiurge and the devil, teaching that the devil was created by the Demiurge as one of his subordinate angels or *archons,* and was the ruler of this material world only. The second-century Marcion, and probably other gnostic Christians, also taught the same. This is why, in the *Acts of John,* Satan is grouped along with other "powers" and "principalities" within the realms of the Demiurge. The writer is speaking of cosmic processes of vast proportions:

> There are places of the right hand and the left,
> powers also, principalities, lordships and demons,
> operations, threatenings, furies, devils, Satan,
> and the lower root whence the nature of the things
> that come into being proceeded.
>
> *Acts of John 98, XIII; cf. ANT p.255, AA pp.18–19*

The language of mysticism can often seem confusing and paradoxical. Since the only means of describing anything is in human terms, the higher mystical realities also have to be portrayed that way, whatever the limitations. All tendencies to anthropomorphize God, Satan and the higher realities must therefore be regarded as purely figures of speech, even though some religious interpretations may be literal. Satan and other aspects of the higher creation are powers and forces lying way beyond the ken of human beings, and the only means of really comprehending them is direct, personal mystic experience. Satan is no more a red-faced devil with pointed ears and a forked tail, living among sulphurous fires, than God is a kindly old man with a long beard inhabiting a damp cloud.

Confusion can also arise when the same names are used to mean different things by different groups and writers. Thus, to the gnostics, the Demiurge was also known as *Sama'el* (*lit.* blind god), *Yaldabaoth* and by various other names. In later Judaism, however, one of the commonest names for Satan was *Sama'el*. But this does not mean that the Demiurge and Satan can always be equated.

See also: **devil, Evil One, negative power, Shayṭān**.

serpent A literary or vernacular term for a snake; one of the commonest metaphors encountered for the devil or Satan in Judaic, Christian, Manichaean, Islamic and other Middle Eastern mystic and religious literature. The image can be traced to early Mesopotamian times, where the pearl of spirituality, symbolizing the Word, is depicted in pottery as being guarded by a serpent. The serpent, as the one who robs man of his immortality, also appears in the ancient Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh,* stealing the Herb of Life from the hero when he goes to bathe.[1]

The earliest occurrence of the term in extant sacred writings is in *Genesis,* in the story of Adam and Eve. In Judaic, Christian and Manichaean literature, the serpent is always the devil who tempts Eve to enter his domain of duality, represented by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Through the fall of Eve, Adam too meets his downfall. According to the allegory, God has instructed them:

> Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,
> thou shalt not eat of it:
> For in the day that thou eatest thereof
> thou shalt surely die.
>
> *Genesis 2:17, KJV*

In fact, having eaten of this Tree, they do not die in the sense that they are extinguished. But by entering the domain of the serpent, the devil, they

lose awareness of their immortality and divine heritage of eternal life, becoming subject to death in the physical universe. This is what the story means when it continues:

> Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God
> make coats of skins, and clothed them.
>
> *Genesis 3:21, KJV*

The "coats of skins" given to Adam and Eve represent the physical body which covers the soul when it enters Satan's domain. God also says to them:

> Because thou hast ... eaten of the tree,
> of which I commanded thee, saying,
> "Thou shalt not eat of it":
> cursed is the ground for thy sake;
> In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;
> Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,
> and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
> till thou return unto the ground;
> For out of it wast thou taken:
> for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
>
> *Genesis 3:17–19, KJV*

Having eaten of the serpent's Tree, they are cursed or condemned to material existence. Instead of receiving the spiritual food of the soul, man has to toil and sweat in order to make the food grow in the ground of the physical realm. He has to struggle with all the vicissitudes of life – the "thorns also and thistles". And he will have to contend with death: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

As regards the serpent, God says:

> And the Lord God said unto the serpent,
> "... I will put enmity between thee and the woman,
> and between thy seed and her seed;
> It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
>
> *Genesis 3:14–15, KJV*

Man will always be at war with the devil, with his own lower nature – he will always be at odds with himself.

There are many places in the ancient literature where the devil is referred to as "the Serpent", "the Dragon" and so on, as in the *Book of Revelation:*

> And the great Dragon was cast out,
> that old Serpent, called the devil and Satan,
> which deceiveth the whole world.
>
> *Book of Revelation 12:9, KJV*

Likewise, one of the Manichaean psalms reads:

> They with whom it (the Word) lodges –
> its grace spreads over them.
> They gird up their loins and arm themselves
> to fight with the Dragon.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.151*

The same understanding of the serpent as the devil is found in the Judaic *Wisdom of Solomon,* dating from the mid-first century BCE. Alluding to the *Genesis* story, the writer says:

> God did make man imperishable (immortal),
> He made him in the image of His own nature;
> It was the devil's envy that brought death into the world.
>
> *Wisdom of Solomon 2:23–24, JB*

Again, in a second-century (CE) Judaic revelational text, *3 Baruch,* the serpent is implicitly understood to be Satan *("Satana'el")* and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is "sinful desire", the impulse that draws the soul away from God:

> The tree is sinful desire which *Satana'el* spread over Eve and Adam,
> … and by that he deceived … Adam and Eve.
>
> *3 Baruch 4:8, OTP1 p.666*

Likewise, in a somewhat fragmentary passage from one of the gnostic texts, it is said that man's downfall came about

> by the evil power which is called the Serpent. And he (the Serpent) is more cunning than all the evil powers. He led man astray through the determination of those things which belong to thought and desire. He made him transgress the Command (God's Word in the garden of Eden), so that he would die. And he was expelled from every enjoyment of that place.
>
> *Tripartite Tractate 107; cf. NHS22 pp.286–87*

A similar understanding was still prevalent in far later times. The medieval *Zohar* says that the Serpent is the power that keeps both men and angels separate from God:

> In the world above, too, because he (the Serpent) is an unclean spirit and they (angels) are holy spirits, they cannot approach their Master until they have driven out the unclean spirit from their midst, for holiness can never mix with uncleanness.... Both sides, the upper and the lower worlds, when they wish to approach the holy King, drive out the *sitra aḥra* (*lit.* the other side). Therefore, when night falls, and the holy angels on high array themselves in ranks in order to approach their Master, they drive this side out first, and then they enter into holiness.
>
> (It is like the story) of the king who had some precious stones in a chest that was hidden in his palace. This king was wise, and in order to prevent anyone who wished from approaching this chest full of precious stones and jewels, he took in his wisdom a powerful serpent and curled it around the chest. Whoever tried to stretch out his hand toward the chest was attacked by the serpent and slain. The king had a special friend. The king said to him: "Whenever you wish to enter and use the chest, do such-and-such to the serpent, and then you may open the chest, and use my hidden treasure."
>
> In the same way, the Holy One, blessed be He, has curled a serpent round the (realm of) holiness. The angels above come, and try to enter into holiness, but the serpent is there and they are afraid of being defiled by it.
>
> *Zohar 2:173a, WZ2 p.519*

See also: **bhujang** (6.2), **Dragon**.

1. *Epic of Gilgamesh* 11:259–99.

Shayṭān (A/P) (pl. *shayāṭīn*) *Lit.* Satan, the devil, the evil one; also, and more generally, any being of evil disposition; from the Hebrew *satan* (to plot against), although Islamic scholars sometimes suggest an Arabic derivation of the term, from *shāṭa* (to be burnt or cooked); Ibn 'Arabī derives it from a root *shaṭṭa* (being far distant), that is, distant from the Reality, from God.[1] The term can be traced back throughout the history of Islam and Sufism, into earlier Christianity and Judaism.

The *Qur'ān* invariably identifies *Shayṭān* as the tempter of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, bringing about their fall. Subsequently, he is the tempter and enemy of humanity. The *Qur'ān* also says, however, that *Shayṭān* has limited authority:

When you read the *Qur'ān*,
seek *Allāh*'s protection from *Shayṭān*, the rejected one.
No authority has he over those
who believe and put their trust in their Lord.
His authority is over those only,
who take him as patron and who join partners with *Allāh*.

Qur'ān 16:98–100; cf. AYA

In Islamic thought, to "join partners with *Allāh*", to consider oneself His equal, is an act of unbelief. The devil, it is said, has no authority over the true believer. Indeed, *Shayṭān* himself says that he only has power over those who listen to him:

And *Shayṭān* will say:
"When the matter is decided:
It was *Allāh* who gave you a promise of truth:
I too promised, but I failed.
I had no authority over you, except to call you.
But you listened to me:
then reproach not me, but reproach your own souls."

Qur'ān 14:22, AYA

Even so, it is only through the grace of the Merciful *(al-Raḥmān)* that any individual is actually able to follow *Allāh* rather than *Shayṭān:*

Were it not for the grace and mercy of God *(Allāh)* unto you,
all but a few of you would have followed Satan *(Shayṭān)*.

Qur'ān 4:83, AYA

For this reason, the *Qur'ān* includes many verses pleading for protection from *Shayṭān*.[2] Those who take *Shayṭān* as a friend, those who content themselves with seeking the satisfaction of "false desires" have suffered a great "loss" in turning away from *Allāh:*

Whoever, forsaking God *(Allāh)*,
takes *Shayṭān* for a friend,
has of a surety suffered a loss that is manifest.
Satan *(Shayṭān)* makes them promises,
and creates in them false desires;
But Satan's *(Shayṭān)* promises are nothing but deception.
They (his dupes) will have their dwelling in hell,
and from it they will find no way of escape.

Qur'ān 4:119–21; cf. AYA

Hence, the *Qur'ān* warns:

> Let not Satan *(Shayṭān)* seduce you.
>
> *Qur'ān 7:27, AYA*

Based on their own mystic understanding, Sufis have expanded on these scant observations. Rūmī says that since God is the supreme ruler and doer, no one really disobeys Him; in fact, *Shayṭān* is utterly obedient to God, and Rūmī portrays *Shayṭān* as an obedient dog, so completely content with the food of man's honour on which God feeds him, that he is utterly "devoted to the divine decree":

> Whatsoever God wills shall come to pass:
> He is the ruler over the worlds of space and non-space.
> Without His command, no one in His kingdom
> shall add so much as the tip of a single hair.
> The kingdom is His kingdom, the command is His:
> that Devil *(Shayṭān)* of His is the meanest dog at His door.
>
> If a Turcoman's dog is lying at the door,
> with his face and head resting on the threshold,
> though the children of the house keep pulling his tail,
> he will be submissive in the children's hands.
> If, however, a stranger pass by,
> he (the dog) will rush at him like a fierce lion;
> For he is "hard on the unbelievers":[3]
> to a friend he is as a rose, to an enemy as a thorn.
> He has become so faithful and vigilant
> on account of the vermicelli broth
> that the Turcoman has given him!
>
> The dog, then, namely the Devil *(Shayṭān)*,
> whom God causes to exist and in whom He creates
> a hundred thoughts and cunning plans,
> and whom He feeds with men's honour,
> so that he takes away the honour of the virtuous and the wicked
> (for the honour of the people is the vermicelli broth
> by which the Devil *(Shayṭān)*-dog is fed) –
> Tell me, how should not his (the Devil's) soul
> be devoted to the divine decree
> at the door of the tent of omnipotence?
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:2937–48; cf. MJR6 p.177*

Rūmī also speaks of *Shayṭān*'s ever ready presence. Depicting this world as a "prison" in which the "food of faith is scarce", he says that if – by great effort – anyone ever experiences a "spiritual feeling", *Shayṭān* "at once carries it off". Either through self-consciousness and spiritual pride, or by contact with the worldly minded, or by invading the mind with desires and fancies, the nascent and easily disturbed spiritual feelings are swept away. "Say at once, 'God help me!'," Rūmī advises, "not with tongue alone, but with your very soul":

> In this prison, the food of faith is scarce,
> and that which does exist is in danger of being caught
> in a noose through the attack of this cur (the devil).
> If from prayer and fasting and a hundred acts of self-abandonment,
> the food of spiritual feeling comes to anyone,
> he (the devil) at once carries it off.
> I seek refuge with God from His *Shayṭān:*
> we have perished, alas, through his overweening disobedience.
>
> He is but one cur, yet he goes into thousands (of people):
> into whomsoever he goes, that person becomes him *(Shayṭān).*
> Whoever cools your spiritual ardour –
> know that he (the devil) is in him:
> The devil *(dīv)* has become hidden beneath his skin.
>
> When he finds no bodily form, he comes into your fancy,
> in order that that fancy may lead you into woe:
> Now the fancy of recreation, now of the shop,
> now the fancy of knowledge, and now of house and home.
> Beware! Say at once, "God help me!" again and again,
> not with tongue alone, but with your very soul.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:635–42; cf. MJR2 pp.254–55*

The term *shayṭān* is also used in a more general sense to refer to the minions of *Shayṭān* – entities or beings who assist him in misguiding humanity. These *shayāṭīn* may be understood as entities separate from a human being or as the personification of lower human tendencies. They are the obstacles which the seekers of God must overcome. Rūmī says that only those who have begun to be aware of their separation from Him are aware of the negative nature of these "satans":

> In some men, lust has overcome their intelligence, so that they are entirely reduced to the level of animals. Others remain struggling. They are those who feel within themselves an agony, an anguish, a

distress, a longing. They are not satisfied with their lives. These are the believers. The Saints are waiting for them, to bring them to their own level and to make them like themselves. And the satans *(shayāṭīn)*, too, are waiting for them, to drag them down towards themselves, to the "lowest of the low".[4]

Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi 17:5–11, KFF p.78; cf. DRA p.90, in SPL p.86

Al-Jīlānī describes human beings as having the potentiality to be both angel and devil *(shayṭān)*:

> Creatures are of three kinds: angel *(malak)*, devil *(shayṭān)* and human *(ins)*. The angel is wholly good. The devil *(shayṭān)* is wholly evil. The human is mixed, a blend of good and evil; so if good predominates, he is connected to the angel, and if the evil predominates, he is linked to the devils *(shayāṭīn)*.

Al-Jīlānī, Utterances, UAQJ p.129

In one way or another, both the *Qur'ān* and the Sufis speak of the pervasive presence of *Shayṭān*. There is a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of Muḥammad) to the effect that "*Shayṭān* runs in man like blood in the veins."[5] Likewise, Sufis have characteristically depicted the individual self *(nafs)* as a *shayṭān*. Sarmad writes:

> This cruel self *(nafs)* of mine is indeed a *shayṭān*,
>   ever visible and not at all hidden.
> You yourself are the devil *(Iblīs)* –
>   why condemn the devil *(Iblīs)*?
> The devil himself is perplexed at your evil thoughts.

Sarmad, Rubā'īyāt-i Sarmad 53; cf. RIS p.10

Spirituality implies the conquest of *Shayṭān*, however he is conceived, and mystics become mystics by virtue of having done so. Hence, Muḥammad, when asked whether he too had a *shayṭān*, replied, "Yes, but *Allāh* helped me and placed him under my control. My *shayṭān* has surrendered to me *(aslama shayṭānī)*, and bids me do only good."[6] Other versions of the *ḥadīth* have it as, "My *shayṭān* has become a Muslim *(aslama shayṭānī)*, and does whatever I order him."[7] That is, Muḥammad had gained control over his *nafs*, his lower nature. His mind had become filled with purity and the love of God. "*Aslama shayṭānī*" can mean either, "My *shayṭān* has surrendered to me," or "My *shayṭān* has become a Muslim."

There is some debate in Islam as to whether *Shayṭān* (Satan) is the same as *Iblīs* (from the Greek, *diabolos*, the devil). The *Qur'ān* is not specific. While *Shayṭān* is always the tempter of Adam and humanity, *Iblīs* is always

the one who refuses to bow down to Adam, at Adam's creation. Either way, the roles of *Shayṭān* and *Iblīs* clearly overlap. Thus, *Allāh* says the same to *Iblīs* as is said of *Shayṭān*:[8]

> For over my servants,
> no authority shall you have,
> except such as put themselves in the wrong,
> and follow you.
>
> *Qur'ān 15:42; cf. AYA*

Both *Shayṭān* and *Iblīs* are also referred to as *al-rajīm* (the accursed, the outcaste).[9] Hence, Muslim prayers always begin with:

> I take refuge in *Allāh* from *Shayṭān* the outcaste *(al-rajīm)*,
> in the Name of *Allāh*, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
>
> *Muslim Invocation*

It seems clear that both *Shayṭān* and *Iblīs* have come from the same mythological roots. But because the two have not been specifically identified in the *Qur'ān*, they are sometimes deemed to be different characters. In its general sense, however, a *shayṭān* is a name given to any being of evil disposition, whether *Iblīs* or any other. Also, while *Iblīs* is always portrayed as a particular character, *Shayṭān* is sometimes taken metaphorically.

Like the origin of evil, the nature of *Shayṭān* remains something of a mystery. A story exemplifying this – and, incidentally, identifying *Iblīs* with *Shayṭān* in the story of the disobedience of *Iblīs* – is told by the mystic al-Junayd:

> At one period in my life … I felt a longing to see in vision what Satan was like. And as I stood in the mosque one day, an old man came through the gateway. His face turned towards me, and at the sight of it my heart clenched with horror. He came nearer, and I cried out: "Who are you? The look of you – the mere thought of you – I cannot bear it."
>
> "I am him you wanted to see."
>
> "The Accursed One," I exclaimed. "Then answer now my question: Why would you not bow down to Adam, for which God cursed you?"
>
> "Junayd," said he, "how could you imagine that I should bow down to any except God?"
>
> The answer startled me. But then a secret voice inside me whispered: "Say to him, 'you're lying – if you had been an obedient servant, you would not have disobeyed His command.'"

And as if he heard the whisper in my heart, the old man cried out: "O God! You've burned me!"

And suddenly, he vanished.

Al-Junayd, in MP p.427

In the end, say the mystics, the answer is not to do battle with *Shayṭān, per se*, or to even think about him at all, but to become completely absorbed in the love of God, thus altogether removing the soul from *Shayṭān*'s sphere of influence. 'Aṭṭār relates a story concerning Rābi'ah[10] who was asked one day, "Do you love the Lord of glory?" She replied, "I do."

She was then asked, "Do you hold *Shayṭān* as an enemy?" She replied, "No."

The other, astonished, asked, "How is that?" Rābi'ah said, "My love for God leaves no room for hating *Shayṭān*," and she went on to say, "I saw the Prophet in a dream, and he said to me, 'O Rābi'ah, do you love me?' I said, 'O Prophet of God, who is there who does not love you? But my love for God has so possessed me that no place remains for loving or hating any save Him.'"

Then someone said to her, "What is Love?" She replied, "Love came from eternity and passed through all eternity, and found no one in the seventy thousand worlds who could drink one drop of it, returning finally to God; and from that comes the saying 'He loves them (His Saints) and they love Him.'[11]"

See also: **devil**, **Iblīs**, **Satan**.

1. Ibn 'Arabī, in *SOA* p.52 (n.1).
2. *e.g. Qur'ān* 3:36, 16:98.
3. *Qur'ān* 48:29.
4. *Qur'ān* 95:5.
5. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 4:54.501, in *MJR7* p.260.
6. *Ḥadīth; cf.* in *MJR7* p.333.
7. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 459, in *MDI* p.113.
8. *Qur'ān* 16:99–100.
9. *Qur'ān* 15:32–34, 16:98.
10. 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* 1, *TAN1* p.67, *TAI* p.81; *cf. RM* p.99.
11. *Qur'ān* 5:54.

shikārī (H) *Lit.* hunter; mystically, a metaphor for the negative power and the powers of the mind.

See **hunter**.

Sinner The devil; a Mandaean and Manichaean term found, for example, in one of the long Parthian hymn cycles where the Saviour promises the soul release from the cycle of birth and death:

> I shall not wish to leave you longer
> in the hands of the Sinner;
> For you are my own, in truth, forever.
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:50, MHCP pp.146–47*

And again:

> And I am come forth to save you from the Sinner,
> to make you whole from pain,
> and to bring gladness to your heart.
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:64; cf. MHCP pp.150–51*

In Mandaean literature, it occurs in an allegorical poem where the Saviour, as the Word, is being commissioned by God ("Life") to go to the world and rescue certain souls from bondage to the "Sinner":

> Life summoned me, ... and gave command:
> To the earth they sent me
> to voice the Call of Life....
> To smoothen a road for the good,
> to prepare a path for the believing....
> To leave dross behind at its proper place,
> to deliver the whole congregation of souls,
> (the souls) of Nāṣoraeans and Mandaeans,
> so that the Sinner may have no power over them.
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 161, CPM pp.138–39*

sitra aḥra (Am) *Lit.* the other side; a Kabbalistic and Hasidic term used for the power of evil, the negative tendencies in creation and within each person; the forces opposing the divine impulse of love. Man's evil or negative tendencies express this 'other side', since both good, as well as evil, are present in every human being.

Sitra aḥra is the aspect of man's make-up which keeps him from realizing God within himself. According to the *Zohar,* in the biblical parable of the garden of Eden, the serpent represents this same force or power.[1]

Sitra aḥra is also represented by the symbol of the *kelipot,* the shards or husks of matter which keep the soul confined to the creation, according to the teachings of eighteenth-century Rabbi Isaac Luria. The *kelipot* represent the absence of the divine light. They are the shadow side, or dark side, and

thus are termed 'the other side'. In Jewish folklore, the term *kelipah* was commonly used as a synonym for the devil or evil.

See also: **serpent**.

1. *Zohar* 2:173b, *WZ2* p.519.

snake A synonym for the serpent, the devil, in Middle Eastern religious and mystical writings.

See **serpent**.

Snarer One who traps small birds or animals, especially in a snare; a hunter; in Manichaean literature, the devil, the one who snares or traps all souls in this world, caging them or putting them to death in physical forms. In one of the Manichaean psalms, for instance, the writer praises Jesus:

> You are a mighty light: Jesus, enlighten me:
> First-born of the Father, …
> Snare of the Snarer.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.166*

And in another, where the "fish" are souls, it is said of Jesus:

> He broke their snares that were set;
> He burst also their nets that were spread:
> he let the fish out to their sea.
>
> *Psalms of Thomas I, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.205*

See also: **hunter**.

spirit of wickedness The devil, the Unclean Spirit, the Wicked One; as in the gnostic text, the *Teachings of Silvanus:*

> My son, guard yourself against wickedness, and do not let the spirit of wickedness cast you down into the abyss. For he is mad and bitter. He is terrifying, and he casts everyone down into a pit of mire (this world).
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 104, NHS30 pp.330–31*

See also: **Akō Mainyu, Angra Mainyu, devil, Wicked One**.

Ssū Mìng (Sī Mìng) (C) *Lit.* lord *(ssū)* of fate *(mìng).* A prominent god in religious Taoism also known as *Tsāo Chūn* (the hearth or kitchen deity). In religious Taoism, an individual's lifespan is either extended or reduced by the lord of fate, depending on his good or evil deeds. According to a well-known volume on religious Taoism, *The Treatise on Action and Recompense (T'ài Shàng Kǎn Yīng P'ièn),* a person's good and evil deeds are reported by the *sān ch'úng* to *Ssū Mìng*. The *sān ch'úng* (three worms) are regarded as spirit entities believed to inhabit every human being. As a result of the accumulation of good and evil deeds, human life is either lessened or prolonged and, so it is said, in the most favourable cases immortality can be bestowed.

See also: **Dharma Rāj**.

Strife An angry or violent struggle, conflict, bitter rivalry; the negative power; used by the Greek mystics for the origin of the negative forces in creation; also translated as Discord.

See **Discord**.

strong man A metaphor for the devil, used by Jesus in one of his short parables. According to the narrative related in Mark's gospel, some of the Jews suggest that Jesus casts out devils because he is in league with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils:

> And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said,
> "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils
> casteth he out devils."
>
> *Mark 3:22, KJV*

Jesus understands Beelzebub as Satan and, as always, he has an apt response:

> And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables,
> "How can Satan cast out Satan?
> And if a kingdom be divided against itself,
> that kingdom cannot stand.
> And if a house be divided against itself,
> that house cannot stand.
> And if Satan rise up against himself,
> and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.
> No man can enter into a strong man's house,
> and spoil his goods,

> except he will first bind the strong man,
> and then he will spoil his house."
>
> *Mark 3:23–27, KJV*

Jesus replies that their accusation makes no sense, for why would Satan cast out the agents of Satan? He then adds that in order to take possession of a strong man's goods, the strong man must first be bound. He means that if a soul wishes to regain its own treasure of spirituality that the devil is withholding, then that devil, the strong man – a person's lower nature – must first be controlled or bound.

The nature of this negative force is significant, for an enemy has to be studied before he can be conquered. Hence, in a parable of Jesus known from the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus again speaks of this "strong man" and the way to overcome him:

> Jesus said, "The kingdom of the Father is like a certain man who wanted to kill a strong man. In his own house he drew his sword, and stuck it into the wall in order to find out whether his hand could carry through. Then he slew the strong man."
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 49:98; cf. NHS20 pp.88–89*

In other words, Jesus advises studying the nature of the "strong man" – the devil – and developing the strength to overcome him. It must also be presumed that the man either lived alone or had a particularly tolerant wife!

See also: **Beelzebub**.

T'ài Yüèh Tà Tì (Tài Yuè Dà Dì) (C) *Lit.* Great Ruler *(Tà Tì)* of the Supreme *(T'ài)* Peak *(Yüèh);* regarded by religious Taoists as ruler of the physical world, under *Yǜ Huáng* (the Jade Emperor) who rules both the heavens and the physical universe. One of the principal duties of *T'ài Yüèh Tà Tì* is to set the time of birth and death of each person, to give people certain stations and fortunes in life, as well as to keep a record of all a person does in life.

See also: **Ssū Mìng, Yǜ Huáng** (4.2).

Tempter One who attempts to persuade or entice another to do something, especially something morally wrong or unwise; the devil. Mystics have often said that man's lower nature, his individual human mind, is the agent, so to speak, of the devil. As such, the Tempter is within every individual in this

world, since all temptations arise in the mind – and they are also due to the activity of the devil.

See also: **devil**, **Satan**.

Tree of Bitterness, Tree of Death, Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil First encountered in the second of the two *Genesis* creation stories, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil symbolizes the knowledge or experience of good and evil. Adam and Eve are tempted by the serpent (Satan) to eat of its fruit. As a result, they become aware of good and evil, meaning that they enter the realm of Satan, the realm where duality prevails. Moreover, they are no longer 'naked', but are clothed in "skins" – bodies – particularly the physical body of skin and flesh.[1]

There are many allusions as well as direct references in the ancient literature to a mystical interpretation of the *Genesis* story. In early Christian writings, for example, Christ as the Tree of Life is portrayed as the antithesis of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Thus, the fourth-century Syrian, Ephraim Syrus, says:

> (Christ was) the Tree of Life which was hidden in paradise,
> grew up in Marjam (Mary), and sprang forth from her.
> In its shade creation has repose,
> and it spreads its fruits over those far and near.
>
> *Ephraim Syrus, ESHS2 521:11; cf. MEM p.125*

It is, he says, through this Tree of Life that the effect of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is dissolved, absolved or forgiven:

> There came unto us, in its love, the blessed Tree.
> The Tree (of Life) absolved the Tree (of Knowledge);
> This fruit came to nothing through that fruit:
> the death-bringing (came to nought) through Life.
>
> *Ephraim Syrus, ESHS2 807:1; cf. MEM p.126*

The "death-bringing" "fruit" of the Tree of Knowledge represents the sins and *karma* committed by the mind or lower nature during the innumerable lives it has been attached to the soul. The law of this Tree of Knowledge, the negative power, is justice, the first principle behind all knowledge and duality. There is no leeway: everything is automatically accounted for, sooner or later, in one way or another. The soul is forced by the attractions and entanglements of the mind to take birth and die, again and again, in body after body. The Tree of the mind, the Tree of Knowledge, is truly

"death-bringing". As it says in *Genesis,* "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."[2]

The Tree of Life, on the other hand, is the primal creative Power of God, the Word. It is love, mercy and forgiveness, rather than justice. Through this life-giving Tree, the effects of the "death-bringing" Tree are absolved. The sins of the past are 'burnt' or eliminated by love and devotion to the divine Word. Eating its fruit bestows "Life" or immortality. If a man should eat of this Tree, says the *Genesis* story, he will "live for ever".[3]

It should be added that Ephraim Syrus, familiar with gnostic teachings, was using the mystical language of his times in reference to his belief in Jesus as the only Saviour. He himself does not appear to have believed in reincarnation.

The differing nature of love and justice is the fundamental difference between the two powers – one epitomizes and is the source and blueprint of all justice, of all cause and effect; the other is the embodiment of love, of mercy, of forgiveness. This distinction is found in the teachings of all perfect Masters and is sometimes interpreted by scholars and followers of the later religion as a dualism of two separate powers in creation. But this is not actually so. There is only one supreme Lord, and everything happens by His design, including the activities of the negative power.

The distinction between these two powers, as the two trees, is also found in Manichaean writings:

> I have distinguished this pair of trees
> of this pair of kingdoms:
> The bitter fountain and the holy Essence of God.
> The light I have distinguished from the darkness,
> Life from death....
> I have known my soul and this body that lies upon it,
> that they are enemies to each other....
> That the divine Power and the hostile power
> are to be distinguished always.
> The body of death, indeed, and the soul are never in accord.
> The god of this *aeon* has shut the heart of the unbelieving,
> and has sunk them in his Error and the deceit of drunkenness.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVIII, MPB pp.56–57*

A more enigmatic psalm makes a similar distinction between the "Tree of Life" and the "Tree of Death":

> Jesus, my light, I cry to you
> in the hour of my going forth from the body;
> Do not, my light, do not forsake me

in the midst of wild beasts.
Let me be worthy, too, to see your Maiden
(the pure, spiritual, angelic form)
for whose sake I have toiled,
who brings all the gifts of the faithful....

I have known and understood
that which is and that which shall be:
What is mortal and what, on the other hand, is immortal;
And what is the King of light,
who is the Tree of Life;
And what again is the darkness,
which is the Tree of Death.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCLV; cf. MPB p.66

Other writers of those times also spoke of the two trees. Describing man's downfall in the allegory of Adam and Eve, the author of the Nag Hammadi treatise, the *Apocryphon of John,* writes that the *"archons"*, rulers within the realm of the negative power, tempt Adam or man to eat out of their tree. They say (metaphorically):

"Eat, that is in idleness," for their pleasure is bitter and their beauty is depraved. And their pleasure is deception, and their trees are godlessness, and their fruit is deadly poison, and their promise is death....

The root of this (tree) is bitter and its branches are death, its shadow is hate and deception is in its leaves, and its blossom is the ointment of evil, and its fruit is death, and desire is its seed, and it sprouts in darkness. The dwelling place of those who taste of it is *Hadēs,* and the darkness is their place of rest.

Apocryphon of John 21–22; cf. NHS33 pp.123, 125, 127

Peter, too, in the *Acts of Peter,* is credited with making the same distinction. In a diatribe against Satan, he says:

You are wholly the exceedingly bitter fruit
of the Tree of Bitterness,
who sends many and various lusts upon men.

Acts of Peter VIII; cf. ANT p.312

The writer of the *Trimorphic Protennoia* expresses the same idea – that the tree whose fruit is eaten by man is "fruit of ignorance":

As for our tree, from which we grew,
a fruit of ignorance is what it has;

> And also its leaves, it is death that dwells in them,
> and darkness dwells under the shadow of its boughs.
> And it was in deceit and lust that we harvested it,
> this (tree) through which ignorant chaos (this world)
> became for us a dwelling place.
>
> *Trimorphic Protennoia 44, NHS28 pp.420–21*

See also: **Ādam** (5.1), **gardens** (4.1), **serpent**, **Tree of Life** (3.1).

1. *Genesis* 3:1*ff.*
2. *Genesis* 2:17, *KJV.*
3. *Genesis* 3:22, *KJV.*

Unclean Spirit See **devil**.

unclean spirit(s) See **devils**.

universal mind The interpenetrating medium or source by which all individual minds are connected as a part of one universal mind. The American transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), used the term in a general sense to mean the "only sovereign agent", the divine Source of all:

> There is one mind common to all individual men. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only sovereign agent.
>
> *Ralph Waldo Emerson, in MJR8 p.145*

Universal Mind has also been used to translate the *Nous* of Plotinus, where it refers to the creative Intelligence or creative Power of God.[1]

Theosophist, Annie Besant (1847–1933), identifies the universal mind with the Sanskrit, *mahat,* which she also calls the third aspect of the *Logos* (according to her system), equating it with the divine creative Intelligence and the Holy Spirit of Christianity.[2] Lying in the higher reaches of the causal plane, this universal mind contains the seeds, the highly refined and subtle patterns or archetypes, of all the forms which come into being or evolve in the astral and physical worlds below:

> The universal mind (is) that in which all archetypically exists: the source of beings, the fount of fashioning energies, the treasure house in which are stored up all the archetypal forms which are to be

> brought forth and elaborated in lower kinds of matter during the evolution of the universe. These are the fruits of past universes, brought over as seeds for the present.
>
> *Annie Besant, The Ancient Wisdom, AW p.51*

Similarly, speaking of what she calls the "mental plane", whose "higher regions" imply the causal plane, she writes:

> In its higher regions exist all the archetypal ideas which are now in the course of concrete evolution and, in its lower, the working out of these into successive forms, to be duly reproduced in the astral and physical worlds.
>
> *Annie Besant, The Ancient Wisdom, AW pp.133–34*

Universal mind has been used in more or less the same sense by the twentieth-century Indian mystic, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, and the Masters following him. Here, it is specifically identified with the power that encompasses the three worlds of the greater mind: the physical *(piṇḍa),* astral *(sūkshma* or *aṇḍa)* and causal *(kāraṇ)* realms. In this context, the term is a translation of the Hindi, *brahmāṇḍī man,* described by these mystics as the prime moulder of all forms, physical or mental, and the architect of time and space. It is the realm of the subtlest mind energies, which constitute the blueprints, seeds or archetypal patterns of all that is manifested below. It is the prime weaver of the web of illusion. Through the ever shifting patterns of time and space, it is the origin of causality and relationship, manifested at the physical level as the law of *karma* (action) – the law of cause and effect. It is the hidden, integrating force between all the seemingly individual minds of the multitude of creatures and beings inhabiting the physical, astral and causal realms. It is the power that must be surmounted before the soul can gain freedom from birth and death, and return to God.

In a letter to an American disciple, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh writes of the extent of the mind in governing the lower realms of creation:

> The mind is no mean power and its control is not an easy walkover. If we carefully examine its working, we will find that it governs all creation, not only on the physical plane, but on the astral and causal planes as well. The angels in heavens, the learned, the pundits and commentators, the hermits and the family men, rich and poor, beasts, birds, insects, all do its bidding.
>
> Under the powerful influence of mind, men act, and the acts become binding on them and become the cause of life hereafter. As we sow, so shall we reap. Whatever we are reaping now, we ourselves have sown before. Therefore, we are the makers of our own fate. The

> framework of our present life, which cannot be altered, was constructed by us before we appeared on this plane. We are also the makers of our future. What we sow now, we will reap hereafter.
>
> So long as mind is our master, it will keep us on the wheel of birth and death. When we are its master, it will be our most faithful ally. Therefore, its control is imperative, and the object of human life is to control it, and thereby get off the wheel of life and death.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 60, SG p.92*

From a mystical perspective, therefore, the mind is vastly more than the individual human mind comprised of thoughts, emotions, memory, intellect, intelligence and so on. If God, the divine Source, is understood as Light, then the universal mind is that which divides that Light into myriad forms and patterns in time and space. All diversity, all difference, all multiplicity and all duality are from this greater mind. The universal mind takes the one Light of the divine and splits it into countless fragments in a kaleidoscope of patterns and relationships, in a multilevel, ultradynamic energy system. However, the universal mind is not self-acting, but takes its power and authority from God, functioning only within His overall scheme of things.

The greater or universal mind is vaster than the entire physical universe. The far more extensive astral and causal planes are created by it, and are under its dominion as well. The universal mind is also the architect of time, stretching back over unimaginable aeons. Every creature that has ever lived on this planet – and the fossil record shows that there have been billions upon billions of them – has been the creation of the mind. So too would be the creatures living in other parts of the physical universe. The mind is the common denominator of existence within the realms it rules.

The mind's law of operation at the physical level is the law of *karma,* of cause and effect. Through the hidden agency of the universal mind, forms evolve which precisely match the changing karmic requirements of the souls which are to incarnate here. Genetic and other developmental and seemingly evolutionary processes are only an external manifestation of the hidden workings of the mind. No chance is involved; everything is precisely orchestrated by the hidden conductor of the mind, according to the karmic needs of the time.

The individual mind is the agent, so to speak, of the universal mind. Mystics say that the purpose of human existence is first to control the individual mind, and then to rise up, spiritually, and go beyond the level of the universal mind. When the soul goes beyond the level of the universal mind, it becomes free from the possibility of birth and death.

Explaining the respective roles of the mind and soul, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh says that the soul is a drop of the ocean of the divine *Shabd* (Word), and the individual mind is a part of the universal mind. The level of the

universal mind is the second stage (also called *trikuṭī*), according to his description of the creation. Beyond that, the soul is free from the mind:

> The body is alive on account of the presence of the soul current in it. The soul is a drop, and the *Shabd* is the ocean. The soul is sustained in the body by *Shabd,* and the body in its turn by the soul. But, so long as the soul is not lifted up to the higher stages, it remains associated with the mind in the lower stages. In the process of concentration, both the mind and the soul – they are closely associated – are lifted up. At the second stage of the spiritual journey, the individual mind will have become purified to such an extent that it will no longer be individual, but will have acquired the characteristics of the universal mind. It has no place in the third stage. From there the soul alone goes up. The soul is the positive power and the mind, the negative.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 198, SG pp.309–10*

Understood as the architect of all diversity and change, the universal mind is the same as the power which Greek mystics such as Empedoclēs called Strife or Discord, which the gnostics called the Demiurge, which some Indian mystics have identified as *Kāl,* and which has been called by many other names.

See also: **Kāl**, **mahat** (5.2), **negative power**, **trikuṭī** (4.1).

1. *e.g.* R.A. Nicholson, Introduction to *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz, SDST* p.xxxii.
2. Annie Besant, *The Ancient Wisdom, AW* p.133.

vyādh, **byādh** (H/Pu), **badhik** (Pu) *Lit.* hunter, stalker; the Punjabi *badhik* means a killer or butcher, as well as hunter; mystically, a metaphor for *Kāl,* as the negative power, and the powers of the mind:

> Day by day and watch by watch,
> the life draws to a close and the body withers away.
> Death *(Kāl)* is walking around like a hunter *(aherī)*
> and a butcher *(badhik):*
> Say, what way should man adopt to escape?
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 691, MMS*

See also: **hunter**.

Wicked One The devil, Satan; used by Jesus, as in the parable of the sower:

> When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom,
> and understandeth it not,
> then cometh the Wicked One,
> and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.
> This is he which received seed by the wayside.
>
> *Matthew 13:19, KJV*

In this parable, the sower, who symbolizes the Saviour, sows the seed of the Word in his disciples. However, their receptivity varies – this is the meaning of the various kinds of ground into which the seed falls. In this instance, says Jesus, the Wicked One or Satan distracts the mind of the new initiate to such an extent that he never even begins to sprout.

The same expression is again found in Matthew, in the parable of the tares, where Jesus explains that the weeds or tares that have been sown in the field of good seed are the "children of the Wicked One":

> The tares are the children of the Wicked One.
>
> *Matthew 13:38, KJV*

These "children" are the imperfections of the human mind with which every spiritual seeker struggles. They are the agents or children of the devil, doing his work of keeping souls distracted from their search for God.

See also: **Adversary**, **devil**, **Enemy**, **Satan**.

Wolf *(Canis lupus)* A metaphor for the devil; part of the family of metaphors used in early Christian writings, centred on the soul as a sheep and the Lord or Saviour as the Shepherd. The Wolf is the enemy who tries to draw the sheep away from the fold of the Shepherd, and devour it. In the *Acts of Peter,* for example, speaking rhetorically to Satan, Peter says:

> Keep for yourself your garments of darkness! …
> For you, ravening Wolf, would carry off the sheep
> that are not yours but are of Christ Jesus,
> who keeps them with all care and diligence.
>
> *Acts of Peter VIII; cf. ANT p.313*

In the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas praises his Master Jesus as the "good Shepherd who gives yourself for your sheep, and has vanquished the Wolf":

Good Shepherd who gives yourself for your sheep,
and has vanquished the Wolf and rescued your lambs,
and led them into a good pasture:
We glorify and praise you and your invisible Father,
and your Holy Spirit, the Mother of all creation.

Acts of Thomas 39; cf. AAA p.181, ANT p.384

See also: **wild animals** (▸2).

Yaldabaoth (He) A gnostic designation of the Demiurge, as the creator of this world and equated in some texts with the devil; possibly derived from *yalda* (child) *bahut* (of chaos). *Yaldabaoth* is a character from the gnostic allegory of *Pistis Sophia* (Faith-Wisdom). *Pistis Sophia* or *Sophia* (Wisdom) is a personification of the primordial Essence who fell from grace, desiring to leave her spiritual home with God, and live in a world of her own creation. The *Apocryphon of John* relates the story of how *Yaldabaoth* comes into being as a cosmic 'mistake' on the part of *Sophia.* Frederik Wisse, translator of this text, relates:

According to the *Apocryphon of John,* the fall occurs when *Sophia* desires to bring forth a being without the approval of the Great Spirit or her consort. Consequently, she produces the monstrous creator-god, *Yaldabaoth,* who still possesses some of the light-power of his mother. *Yaldabaoth* creates angels to rule over the world and aid in the creation of man; man himself is fashioned after the perfect Father's image....

Man comes to life when *Yaldabaoth* is tricked into breathing light-power into him. Thus begins a continuous struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness for the possession of the divine particles in man. The evil powers put man in a material body to keep him imprisoned, and also create woman and sexual desire to spread the particles of light and make escape more difficult. Finally, Christ is sent down to save humanity by reminding people of their heavenly origin. Only those who possess this knowledge and have lived ascetic lives can return to the realm of light; the others are reincarnated until they also come to saving knowledge *(gnosis).*

Frederik Wisse, Introduction to the Apocryphon of John, NHL p.104

As the *Apocryphon of John* explains:

She *(Sophia)* called his name *Yaldabaoth.* This is the chief *Archon* (Ruler) who took a great power from his Mother. And he removed

himself from her, and moved away from the places in which he was born. He became strong and created for himself other *aeons* (realms and rulers) with a spark of luminous fire which (still) exists now. And he was overwhelmed by his own inner arrogance, and he begot authorities (rulers) for himself....

And when the light had mixed with the darkness, it caused the darkness to shine. And when the darkness had mixed with the light, it darkened the light, and it became neither light nor dark, but it became dim.

Now the *Archon* who is weak has three names. The first name is *Yaldabaoth,* the second is *Saklas* (Fool), and the third is *Sama'el* (blind god). And he is impious in his own inner arrogance. For he said, "I am God and there is no other God beside me," for he is ignorant of (the source of) his strength, the place from which he had come.

And the *archons* created seven powers for themselves, and the powers created for themselves six angels for each one until they became three hundred and sixty-five angels.

Apocryphon of John 10–11; cf. NHS33 pp.63, 69, 71

Variant accounts of the same myth are recounted in gnostic texts, and in the *Origin of the World* (possibly early fourth century CE) the meaning of the name is supposedly given:

And when *Pistis Sophia* desired to cause the thing that had no spirit to be formed into a likeness, and to rule over matter and over all her forces, there appeared for the first time a ruler, out of the waters, lionlike in appearance, androgynous, having great authority within him, and ignorant of whence he had come into being. Now when *Pistis Sophia* saw him moving about in the depth of the waters, she said to him, "Child, pass through to here," whose equivalent is *"yalda baoth"*.... Now as for the ruler *Yaldabaoth,* he is ignorant of the force of *Pistis:* he did not see her face, rather he saw in the water the likeness that spoke with him. And because of that voice, he called himself *Yaldabaoth....*

Now the prime parent, *Yaldabaoth,* since he possessed great authorities, created heavens for each of his offspring through 'speech' – created them beautiful, as dwelling places – and in each heaven he created great glories, seven times excellent. Thrones and mansions and temples, and also chariots and virgin spirits up to an invisible one and their glories, each one has these in his heaven; mighty armies of gods and lords and angels and archangels – countless myriads – so that they might serve.

On the Origin of the World 100:10, 12, 19; cf. NHS21 pp.34–35, 38–39

See also: **Demiurge**.

Yam(a), Yam(a) Rāj(a) (S/H), **Jam, Jam Rāj** (H/Pu) *Lit.* restrainer *(yama)* king *(rāja),* from *yam* (to curb); a character from Hindu mythology who administers the fate of souls after their death; thus, the lord of death, the angel of death, the ruler and judge of the dead, lord of departed spirits; also known as *Dharam Rāi* (lord of justice) and *Kāl* (*lit.* time, lord of death).

The term *yam,* is also used for the messengers of *Yam Rāj* (the *yamdūts*), souls whose role it is to meet the dead as they leave this world. In *ashṭānga yoga,* ten *yāmas* (restraints or disciplines) are advised in the classical text, the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā,* for the seeker of spiritual advancement.

Hindu mythological accounts of *Yama* vary. In one, *Yama* was a mortal, but being the first to find his way into the celestial spheres by the *pitṛiyāna* (path of the fathers), he was deified. Another myth describes him as a solar deity, son of the sun god, *Vivasvat.* He was the first among the immortals to choose a mortal destiny, relinquishing immortality in order to conquer death and to lead the mortal world after him. *Yama* is generally presented as the dark lord of death, strict and severe with sinners.

Yama is traditionally portrayed as dark green in colour, with glowing red eyes, red garments and a defective leg. His mount is a black buffalo, a form which he himself also assumes at times, especially when approaching his victims. He is accompanied by two dogs, each with four eyes. His weapons are the mace *(gadā),* representing punishment, and a noose called *kālasūtra* (black cord) with which to capture his victims. He also carries a rod, a sword and a dagger.

Yama is said to dwell in *Yamapura* (city of *Yama*), seated on his throne of judgment, *Vichārabhū* (examination place). Souls are brought into his presence by his messengers, the *yamadūtas.* The good and bad deeds of every individual brought before him are read out by his record keeper, *Chitragupta,* from a register. *Yama* then assesses the account, judgment is passed, and the soul is conducted by the *yamadūtas* to an appropriate destination. Good souls are sent to heaven *(svarga),* and sinners go to hell to receive just retribution. After enjoying the result of their good deeds or undergoing suffering for their bad deeds, for the prescribed period, souls are reborn in this world.

Characteristic of Indian mythology, however, *Yama* is not always depicted in the same manner. Although, through fear of death and the consequences of *karma,* he is often popularly understood to be a cruel and relentless tyrant, Indian mythology generally portrays him differently. There, he is a wise judge, administering justice according to the karmic law. If an individual's *karma* deserves punishment, *Yama* decrees it; but *Yama* is not responsible for the suffering meted out. He is only the administrator.

In the *Mahābhārata, Yama* is the divine father of Yudhishṭhira, where he is described as "splendid like the sun, of faultless blackness, beautiful with red eyes". The *Padma Purāṇa* says that he resembles *Vishṇu,* "with

four arms, a dark complexion. His eyes resemble open lotuses.... His face is charming, smiling."

In some instances, *Yama* even modifies the fruits of *karma* on grounds of compassion, as in a story related in the *Mahābhārata*.[1] Sāvitrī, the only daughter of Ashvapati of Madra, marries Satyavān, the son of Dyumatsena, King of Shālva, who is living a forest life after being wrongfully deposed. Sāvitrī marries Satyavān of her own volition despite the warning of a sage that he is destined to die in a year's time. When only four days of her husband's life remain, Sāvitrī begins a fast. Then, when *Yama* arrives on the fourth day and carries off Satyavān, she follows him, pleading for the restoration of her husband's soul to his body.

Yama points out that Satyavān's allotted time is over, but she begs him so earnestly that *Yama* grants her a multitude of boons, including the restoration of her father-in-law's kingdom and one hundred sons. Even so, he emphasizes that he cannot restore her husband to life. Sāvitrī then points out that his promise of a hundred sons cannot be fulfilled if her husband is dead. Pleased with her devotion and sincerity, *Yama* finally relents, and restores her husband to life.

Yama is also one of the two central characters in the well-known *Kaṭha Upanishad,* which tells the story of the young Nachiketas, a seeker of spiritual truth. Nachiketas is the son of Ṛishi Vājashravasa who has performed a sacrifice that entails, among other things, the distribution of all his property to the *brāhmaṇs.* The *ṛishi's* most significant property is a herd of cows. But when they are assembled, Nachiketas sees that they are so old and unfit for any useful purpose that they will be a most inappropriate gift. Realizing that this will only bring suffering to his father after death, Nachiketas tries to dissuade him from giving away his property. Nachiketas insists that since he, his son, is also his father's property, he should also be given away; and he asks his father to whom he is going to be given. At first, his father refuses to answer. But Nachiketas repeats his question three times, and his father, exasperated and annoyed, finally replies that he will give him to *Yama,* the lord of death. Obedient to his father, Nachiketas goes to *Yama's* dwelling.

Yama is away when Nachiketas arrives, returning only after three days, and Nachiketas has to wait. As the arbiter of man's fate after death, *Yama* has the power to grant favours. Disturbed at his inhospitality to Nachiketas, he grants him three boons, as compensation for his absence:

> O *brāhmaṇ,* you are an honourable guest,
> and have stayed in my house
> for three nights without food.
> Therefore, choose now three boons, one for each (night).
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:1.9*

The first boon asked by Nachiketas is to take away his father's anger, and to allay his anxiety concerning his son's safe return. The second is to know how to perform the fire sacrifice by which a person may reach the heavenly *Brahmaloka,* and there enjoy long life, free from old age, disease and suffering. These boons are readily granted.

Nachiketas's third request, however, causes consternation, and it is from here that the teaching of the *Kaṭha Upanishad* begins. Nachiketas asks to be told the secret of the *ātman* (soul) – what is it? Is it immortal? Where does it go after death? – and so on. According to tradition, a spiritual seeker is never granted knowledge without first proving his worthiness. *Yama* therefore sets about testing the young Nachiketas with the various temptations of life as alternative boons. But Nachiketas is wise enough to resist and, ultimately, the main dialogue begins. *Yama* then reveals to him the ancient wisdom concerning the soul, its nature, its origin and its destiny.

Indian Saints have made use of some of the characters of Hindu mythology in their descriptions of the mystic path, thereby indicating the essential meaning of these characters. *Yam* or *Yam Rāj* has been equated with *Kāl* or *Dharam Rāi,* all three of which have been used by Saints as terms for the negative power. This is the power which is ultimately the origin of the law of *karma,* and is thus the one who is really responsible for the fate of souls after their death:

How shall I describe the way
  that *Kāl* dominates the world?
He has ensnared all creatures
  and is misleading them.
No one fears his death,
  nor stands in awe of *Yam.*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:12.7–8, SBP p.121

You have wasted the four stages of life
  without ever remembering the Lord's Name *(Nām).*
When you leave the body,
  Yam will beat you:
For sinners go to the abode of *Yam.*

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Vṛidh Avasthā 87, SBB p.26

See also: **Dharma Rāj, Kāl, yāma** (▸2), **yamadūta** (4.2).

1. *Mahābhārata* 3:277–83.

6.2 The Veil of the Physical

Mystics have said unanimously that this world is one of impermanence. Everything here is in a state of constant flux. They go on to say that man spends his life chasing evanescent mirages until the day that death overtakes him; and they assert that, from a spiritual point of view, to spend a lifetime in such a way is simply to waste it.

With surprisingly little variation according to cultural background, mystics have described life in this world as illusion, error, deceit, a play, and the interaction of pleasure and pain. They have depicted man's condition as madness and drunkenness. As he tries frantically to obtain the pleasure and avoid the pain, he little realizes that every happiness or pleasure in this world has unhappiness and pain stamped indelibly on its other side – even if only because such pleasures are transient and leave a sense of vacuum in their wake.

Mystics are universally agreed that in his separation from God, man has fallen into a state of deep spiritual ignorance, caused by the illusory play of material life, which distracts the soul from understanding its true divine nature, causing it to become the victim of sin.

The present section of terms covers man's separation from God and the condition in which he finds himself in this world. Terms concerning the general nature of 'sin' are also included.

Key entries: **avidyā, māyā, sin and evil, sin (in early Christianity), sin (in Judaism), spiritual ignorance**.

abode of darkness The physical universe, the material world; a Mandaean term, commonly contrasted with the place of light and the everlasting abode. In an allegorical poem, for example, a Saviour has been sent to the world, but is receiving a mixed response. Those who rejected him, says the poet, "will be held back in the abode of darkness".[1] He is referring to this world.

See also: **Babylon**, **darkness**, **worlds of darkness**.

1. *Mandaean Prayer Book* 164, *CPM* p.143.

achet (H/Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* conscious *(chetan);* inanimate, irrational, senseless, foolish, thoughtless, unmindful, stupid, dead, unconscious, insensible, out of one's mind, careless, heedless, inattentive, negligent, forgetful; hence, ignorant; mystically, a description of man's condition in this world:

> O ignorant *(achet)* man, dread thou the sin;
> Who is compassionate to the poor, and the destroyer of all dread:
> enter thou His sanctuary.
>
> *Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 220, MMS*

> The unmindful *(achet)* fool knows not that, each day,
> his breaths are on the decrease:
> His most beauteous body is wearing off,
> and old-age, the daughter of Death *(Kāl),* is eating it up.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1359, MMS*

See also: **jāḍa**.

Ādi Kumārī (H) *Lit.* first or primal *(ādi)* maiden *(kumārī);* primal virgin; primal *māyā;* the first form of *māyā* (illusion) to come into existence. *Kumārī* means maid, daughter, virgin, princess. *Kumārī* is used as a form of address for unmarried girls or ladies, like Miss or Mademoiselle. Since *māyā* is often portrayed as the archetype of feminine temptation or beguilement, its first seeds are metaphorically described as *Ādi Kumārī,* the Primal Maiden.

The term appears in an allegorical account of the creation in *Anurāg Sāgar (Ocean of Love),* a book that is a part of the tradition associated with Kabīr. According to the story, *Kāl* (*lit.* time, the lord of death) has long desired to create the three worlds of *piṇḍa, aṇḍa* and *brahmāṇḍa.* To earn the right to do so, he has been performing the great penance of standing on one leg for many *yugas.* Moved by this effort, *Sat Purush* (true Being) decides to grant *Kāl* his desire. He therefore creates *Ādi Kumārī,* and sends her to

meet *Kāl* who is residing at that time at *mānsarovar*, before being banished under the orders of *Sat Purush*. *Kāl* and his new consort, *Ādi Kumārī* or primal *māyā*, are then able to create the realms of the mind. Since she is created with eight arms, *Ādi Kumārī* is also known as *Ashṭāngī*. Because she is the primal female power, she is also called *Ādi Shakti* or *Ādi Māyā*. In the story, *Kāl* is called *Nirañjan:*

> Moved by *Nirañjan*'s service, *Sat Purush*,
> the merciful One *(Dayāl)*, in His grace,
> overlooked the merits and demerits of *Nirañjan*.
> In that moment, an impulse arose within *Sat Purush*,
> and from it was formed an eight-armed Maiden *(Ashṭāngī)*.
> Entrusting her with the primal seed of eighty-four *lakhs* of souls,
> He commanded: "Bring about the creation of animate beings."
> The Maiden bowed her head and proceeded.
> Thus, all this was given to the Primal Maiden *(Ādi Kumārī)*,
> and she proceeded to *mānsarovar* (to meet *Kāl Nirañjan*).
>
> *Anurāg Sāgar, ASLV pp.20–21*

The story is to be understood as an allegory of the creative process. *Kāl*'s standing on one leg probably signifies that for many ages he had had the desire or the energy to create, but not the authority or divine will behind him to actually do so. Put in another way, it can be said that he had the potential in seed form for creating the realms of the mind but, until the souls were entrusted to *Ādi Kumārī*, he had no souls with which to populate these regions. His desire was therefore essentially 'one legged'. Either way, human words and concepts are inadequate to really describe the processes of creation, and the explanation is to be taken only as an allegory.

Ādi Kumārī thus represents the first seeds of illusion, often symbolized as a beautiful and seductive woman. With her aid, *Kāl* has made all the worlds within his jurisdiction.

See also: **māyā**.

Ādi Māyā (H) *Lit.* primal *(ādi)* illusion *(māyā)*, personified as a goddess; *māyā* in its primal or most subtle form. *Ādi Māyā* appears as a character in an allegorical account of creation in *Anurāg Sāgar*, a book that is a part of the tradition associated with Kabīr.

See also: **Ādi Kumārī, māyā**.

Ādi Shakti (H) *Lit.* primal *(ādi)* power *(shakti);* the goddess of primal power; *māyā* in its primal or most subtle form. The concept is explained in the allegorical account of creation given in *Anurāg Sāgar,* a book that is a part of the tradition associated with Kabīr.

See also: **Ādi Kumārī**.

agni (S/H), **agan** (Pu) *Lit.* fire; mystics have used the term to mean the fire of *māyā* (illusion), the fire of the human passions or the fire of life in this world in which, they say, all souls are burning:

> As is the fire of the womb *(agan udar)* within,
> so is the fire of *māyā* without.
> The fire *(agan)* of *māyā* and of the womb are all the same.
> The Creator has set agoing this play *(khel).*
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 921, MMS*

> If thou wishest to quench the fire *(agan)* (of *māyā*),
> then seek thou the water of the Lord's Name:
> But, save (without) the *Guru,* this ocean of water is found not.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1411, MMS*

> Here and hereafter, Thou art the Protector:
> in mother's womb Thou cherisheth the child.
> The fire *(agan)* of *māyā* affects not
> those who are imbibed in the Lord's love,
> and sing His praises.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 132, MMS*

See also: **tattva** (5.1).

ajñāna (S), **agyān** (H/Pu), **agyāntā** (H/Pu) *Lit.* lack of *(a)* knowledge *(jñāna, gyān);* absence of knowledge; ignorance, particularly spiritual ignorance or nescience; man's ignorance of his real being as soul *(ātman)* and of the true purpose of human life. Sahajobāī calls this ignorance the "greatest misery":

> Desire is misery, hope is misery,
> ignorance *(agyān)* is the greatest misery.
> Says Sahajo, that *sādhu* (holy man) is happy
> who has attained true knowledge *(gyān).*
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Sādh Lakshaṇ 38, SBB p.15*

Ajñāna is also the mistaken belief that participation in religious services, rites, ceremonies, pilgrimages, the worship of idols, fasting, charity, the recitation of holy books, and other external practices will lead to salvation. 'Ināyat Khān writes:

> The soul's happiness comes when it is freed from its physical burden; it can only be happy when it can be itself. As long as man thinks he is his body, so long is he mortal, being only conscious of his mortal existence. But this, intellectually understood, will not help. The soul must see itself, the soul must realize itself.... The mystics ... actually saw that the soul stands independently of this physical garb. Buddha has called it *jñāna,* which means realization. The absence of it is called *ajñāna,* the lack of realization.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK6 p.27*

Other mystics have said the same thing, often equating the dispelling of ignorance with the grace of their Master *(Guru).* Guru Amardās compares the soul to a foolish bride who fails to recognize the "Bridegroom" who is with her, passing her nights in misery. Such is the state of those without knowledge *(agyān):*

> O woman, the false one is cheated by falsehood:
> The true and beauteous, beloved Lord
> is obtained by divine deliberation (meditation) imparted by the *Guru.*
> The perverse brides know not the Bridegroom:
> how shall they pass their life-night?
> Filled with ego, they burn in desire,
> and suffer pain in another's love.
>
> They who are imbued with the Word *(Shabd)* are His happy wives,
> from within them pride is eliminated.
> They ever enjoy their Spouse,
> and their life-night passes in extreme bliss.
>
> The Bridegroom has abandoned
> those who are devoid of divine knowledge *(gyān),*
> and they cannot obtain His love.
> She who is of indiscreet intellect (*agyān,* spiritual ignorance)
> is in darkness.
> Without beholding the Husband (Lord), her hunger departs not.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 38, MMS*

He also says that ignorance is dispelled by the knowledge of the *Guru:*

The *Guru* has applied to mine eyes
the true salve of divine knowledge *(gyān).*
Within my mind, the divine light has dawned,
and the darkness of ignorance *(agyān)* is dispelled.
My light has merged with the supreme Light:
My mind is propitiated,
and I am blessed with glory in the God's court.
Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 124, MMS

See also: **avidyā**, **jñāna** (▸2), **spiritual ignorance**.

ajñānī (S), **agyānī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* one without *(a)* knowledge *(jñāna, gyān);* an ignorant person; the opposite of a *gyānī;* one who has no spiritual awareness; one who is worldly minded and has no inclination for inner spiritual wisdom:

She who understands not the significance of virtue and sin
and is attached with duality, is lost in illusion.
The ignorant, blind man *(agyānī)* knows not the right path,
and comes and goes again and again.
Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 110, MMS

ākār(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* form(s), shape(s), outline(s), delineation(s); hence, created things. All things in the realms of diversity have forms and shapes, brought into existence by the creative Power of God, His Name *(Nām)* or Order *(Hukam):*

Lord's Name *(Nām)* is the prop of all the bodies (*ākār,* forms).
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 284, MMS

By the Lord's Order *(Hukam),*
bodies (*ākār,* forms) are produced:
His Order *(Hukam)* cannot be narrated.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1, MMS

God, though without form Himself, has given rise to all forms:

He whose limit no one knows:
that immaculate Lord is all by Himself.
He Himself is with form *(ākār),*
and Himself formless *(nirankār).*

Within every heart is He the Lord,
and of all the hearts He is the mainstay.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 863, MMS

alien Something or some person foreign to the environment in which they are found; a metaphor for the soul in this world who has become alienated from God. Thus, in the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas – here representing the Saviour or Master – is described as:

Apostle of the Living God,
and Guide in the path of Life,
and Revealer of the mysteries of the Truth –
Many are the things that have been done for us
who are aliens from the glorious God whom you preach,
and until now we do not dare to say that we are His,
because our works are alien from Him
and hateful before Him.

Acts of Thomas III; cf. AAA p.179

In the Manichaean literature, the mystic Mānī is described as living among the people of this world as among aliens. Here, the worldly people are aliens with respect to the man of God:

He was like a lamb dwelling in an alien flock, or similar to a bird living with other birds who do not speak the same language. For throughout all that time he lived always in their midst with wisdom and skill without any of them knowing who he was or what he had received and what had been revealed to him. Rather they treated him according to his bodily significance.

Manichaean Text, KMC2 73:8–74:5 pp.93–5, in MLRE p.34

See also: **gharīb**, **stranger**, **wanderer**, **wayfarer**.

anattā (Pa) *Lit.* without *(a)* self *(attā);* identification with a false sense of self; from the Sanskrit *anātman, ātman* meaning 'self' or 'soul'. In Buddhism, *anattā* is regarded as one of the three primary characteristics of existence in this world, the other two being *anichcha* (impermanence) and *dukkha* (suffering, pain), as mentioned in the *Dhammapada.*[1]

The term embodies the Buddhist doctrine that there is no immortal soul residing in the human body, and seems to be in direct contrast with the Hindu concept of the *jīva* (incarnate soul) and the doctrine of transmigration of

the immortal soul. In Buddhism, an individual is viewed as being made up of five *skandhas* – body, sensations, thoughts (perception), feelings and consciousness. The annihilation of the false identification with the five *skandhas* leads to *nirvāṇa* – the blissful realization of the eternal principle in all things.

Nirvāṇa is understood as the unity within all things which cannot be separately possessed by any individual. Hence, the Buddhist doctrine that there is no individual soul, only one Reality. However, although there are many places where Buddha is clearly speaking only of a human self *(attā)* rather than an immortal essence, it is actually uncertain whether he really taught that there was no unchanging, immortal soul. Had he done so, *nirvāṇa* would be a state of complete annihilation, something which is not a part of his teachings. Both Hindu and Buddhist mystics would agree that the experience of enlightenment is utterly beyond words. The differences between their doctrines may therefore be only a matter of nomenclature and semantics.

See also: **anitya**, **attā** (5.1), **duḥkha**.

1. *Dhammapada* 20:5–7.

andhā (H/Pu) *Lit.* blind; thus, foolish, deceived, dark, dim; spiritually, descriptive of the soul living in a state of spiritual ignorance:

> Fools, living in ignorance *(avidyā),*
> wise in their own conceit
> and puffed up with vain scholarship,
> wander about, afflicted by many ills,
> like the blind *(andhā)* led by the blind *(andhā).*
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:2.8; cf. Kaṭha Upanishad 1:2.5*

See also: **ajñāna**, **ajñānī**, **andhakāra**, **blindness**, **darkness**.

andhakār(a) (S/H/Pu), **andherā** (H/Pu), **andhiār** (Pu) *Lit.* darkness; also, dark, dim; thus, spiritual darkness, spiritual ignorance; the general condition of souls in this world:

> Thick, intense darkness *(andherā)* prevails in the world,
> and within the body is a storehouse of darkness.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 14:12.1, SBP p.114*

This spiritual darkness is removed by contact with the mystic Name:

If man is blessed with the Name,
his inner darkness *(andhiār)* changes into illumination.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 796, MMS

See also: **ajñāna**, **ajñānī**, **andhā**, **darkness**.

anitya (S/H), **anichcha** (Pa), **anit** (Pu) *Lit.* without *(a)* permanence *(nitya)*; impermanent, transient, transitory, ephemeral, perishable; not eternal or everlasting; occasional, casual, irregular, unusual, unsteady, fickle, uncertain, doubtful. The abstract noun form is *anityatā* (impermanence). In Buddhism, *anichcha* is regarded as one of the three primary characteristics of existence in this world, as mentioned by the Buddha in the *Dhammapada.*[1] The other two are *dukkha* (suffering, pain) and *anattā* (the absence of a permanent identity or self).

Mystics have always described this world as impermanent and transitory, since everything – from the smallest atom to the entire universe – is in a state of constant flux and movement. In fact, the world exists entirely by virtue of its motion, its primary source of existence being the primal vibration and dynamic power of the eternal Sound or Word of God. If there were no movement and incessant vibration lying at the very heart of things, there would be no creation.

Mystics have therefore described the creation as the dance, the play *(līlā)*, the drama or the projection of the Lord. And they have pointed out what should really be self-evident – that nothing in this world lasts forever, that life itself may end before a person can take another breath. Consequently, they advise taking practical steps to fulfil the spiritual purpose of human life by seeking eternity, rather than forever chasing after evanescent things which have no more reality than phantoms and dreams.

The term is used in traditional Hindu texts, as well as by later Saints and mystics:

Brahman alone is permanent *(nitya)*:
all things other than it are transient *(anitya)*.
Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 1:16

This world is impermanent *(anitya)*:
know the soul alone to be permanent.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Satta Bairāg Jagat Mithyā 5, SBB p.36

With the help of the lamp of knowledge,
distinguish the permanent *(nitya)*
from the impermanent *(anitya)*.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Rāg Sārang 1:4, SBB p.59

The term is used in the *Ādi Granth* by Guru Arjun:

> Illusory (*anit*, transitory) are riches,
> illusory *(anit)* are the mind's dreams,
> and illusory *(anit)* are the hopes of many sorts and kinds.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1355, MMS*

See also: **anattā**, **duḥkha**.

1. *Dhammapada* 20:5–7.

asat desh, **asat des**, **asat pad** (H/Pu) *Lit.* unreal *(asat)* country *(desh)* or place *(pad);* the abode of untruth, the place of unreality; the physical universe. The nature of this world, sustained as it is by constant change, obscures the vision of what is eternal and unchanging, or true in a mystic sense. Hence, it is called the region of untruth.

See also: **asat** (2.2), **drujō demānā**.

ashānt(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* calm *(shānt);* restless, anxious, disquieted, devoid of peace; spiritually, this world, which is always shifting and changing, taking the mind with it, permitting no lasting or real inner peace to the mind.

āvaraṇ(a) (S/H) *Lit.* covering, cloak, sheath, barrier, enclosure; mystically, the veil of illusion that hides Reality from human consciousness. According to *Advaita Vedānta*, *āvaraṇa* is one of the two forms of *avidyā* (ignorance). *Āvaraṇa* is the power to conceal Reality; *vikshepa* is the shaking of the mind. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh says:

> The Sound Current never stops; it is going on within us without any interruption.... We could not live if it were to stop even for a second. It is the life current in us. The Sound is permanently there, but we do not hear it when our attention is scattered. Our mind is always shaking. When the water of a lake is agitated, we do not see the reflection of our face in it, and if the water is muddy, the mud is an additional disturbing factor. When the water is still and the mud settles down to the bottom, the face becomes visible in the clear water.
>
> Similarly, when the waves of *mal* (impurity), *vikshep* (shaking of the mind) and *āvaraṇ* (the veil of illusion), that constantly disturb our mind, disappear, and the mirror of the heart becomes clear and pure,

it begins to reflect the inner beauties. This cleansing process is accomplished by *simran* (repetition) and *bhajan* (listening to the inner Sound).

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, in Call of the Great Master, CGM pp.210–11

See also: **avidyā**, **vikshepa** (▸2).

avidyā (S/H), **avijjā** (Pa) *Lit.* lack of *(a)* knowledge *(vidyā)*; absence of knowledge; ignorance, particularly spiritual ignorance; hence, nescience, spiritual blindness, folly. *Avidyā* can be individual (as in the case of the *jīva* or incarnated soul) or as a universal principle, when it is identified with *māyā*, the power of illusion in the realms of the mind.

Māyā is the force underlying or identified with *Shakti*, the mother or power from which the Hindu triad *Brahmā*, *Vishṇu* and *Shiva* (personifications of the three *guṇas*) come into being. Since *Shakti* or *Ashṭāngī*, in reflected form, is also the presiding goddess or power at the throat *chakra*, mystics such as Kabīr have also called this deity, *Avidyā*.

In Buddhism, *avidyā* is the first of the twelve *nidānas* (links) in the chain of causation, being considered as the primary cause of existence. It is also the last of the ten fetters because, until *nirvāṇa* has been attained, there still remains some degree of ignorance. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha describes ignorance as the greatest impurity *(mala)*:

There is one impurity *(mala)*
greater than all other impurities *(mala)*.
Ignorance *(avijjā)* is the greatest impurity *(mala)*.
O *bhikkhus!* Casting aside this impurity *(mala)*,
be without impurity *(nimmala)*.

Dhammapada 18:9

In the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, *avidyā* is described as the first of the five *kleshas* (afflictions) which beset mankind, the remaining four being *asmitā* (egotism), *rāga* (material loves and attachments), *dvesha* (aversions and hatreds) and *abhinivesha* (*lit.* determination; here, the strong desire for physical life). *Avidyā* is said to be the root of the other four, arising through perceiving what is not-self as the self *(ātman)*, the unpleasant as the pleasant, and the impure as pure. In Vedantic thought, it is from *avidyā* that the perception of multiplicity arises in the relative world, concealing the true nature of the undivided One *(Brahman)*. In short, it makes an individual see untruth as truth, affording the fundamental cause of bondage to this world and to the wheel of birth and death. The *Yoga Sūtras* say:

Avidyā, egotism, attachment, aversion
and clinging to life are the afflictions *(kleshas)*.
Avidyā is the ground in which the others grow,
whether they are dormant, weakened and mastered,
or active and fully operative.
Avidyā is taking the transitory *(anitya)* as permanent *(nitya)*,
the impure *(ashoucha)* as the pure *(shoucha)*,
pain *(duḥkha)* as pleasure *(sukha)*,
and the unreal self, as the true Self.

Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 2:3–5

In *Advaita Vedānta*, *avidyā* is said to be both active and passive. It manifests actively by making things appear to be that which they are not, as in a mirage. It creates misapprehensions, misinterpretations and all kinds of false impressions. It manifests passively as ignorance of the One who underlies all diversity.

The *Vedāntasāra* says that *avidyā*, though active, is actually intangible. It is not made of any substance. *Avidyā* is described as possessing two interwoven aspects or powers – concealment *(āvaraṇa)* of the real nature of *Brahman*, and the projection *(vikshepa)* of name and form.[1]

Since *avidyā* is the power by which the illusion of the untrue is taken as the true, *avidyā* is often identified with *māyā* (illusion). However, while *māyā* is illusion as a principle in creation to which all things in the worlds of the mind are subject, *avidyā* is also used for the spiritual ignorance of the unliberated soul or *jīva*. Other closely related terms are *prakṛiti* and *ajñāna*. Swāmī Nikhilānanda explains the fine distinctions:

> Vedantists use such terms as *avidyā, ajñāna* and *prakṛiti* as practically synonymous with *māyā*.... Under the influence of *avidyā* or nescience, *ātman* or pure consciousness appears as the *jīva* or individualized self. *Ajñāna* is the ignorance which makes the Absolute appear as the relative, or the One as many. The word *prakṛiti* (matter or Nature) is used to denote *māyā* as the material out of which the universe has been created. But, in actual practice, these distinctions are not always maintained. The words are often interchanged.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.49*

Continuing, he uses Shankara's example of a man in the dark who mistakes a rope for a snake. His emotions and reactions are entirely those of a man who thinks he has grasped a snake. Only when the situation is seen in the light does he realize his error, illusion or ignorance:

> Because of ignorance a rope appears to be a snake; and it continues to be perceived as such so long as the ignorance lasts. But when the true nature of the rope is seen, the idea of the snake disappears. *Avidyā,* or nescience, and its effects, such as time, space and causality, are beginningless for those who are subject to it. But when ignorance is destroyed by right Knowledge, all such notions as the *jīva*-hood of *ātman* and its birth and death cease to exist, just as the dream ego functioning in sleep vanishes when the dreamer awakes.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS p.84*

Shankara himself, in the *Ātmabodha,* describes *avidyā* as the first *upādhi* or limitation incurred by the *ātman* or soul:

> *Avidyā* (spiritual ignorance), indescribable and beginningless, is said to be the cause, which is an *upādhi* superimposed on the *ātman....*
>
> The body and so on, perceivable objects created by *avidyā,* are as transient as bubbles. Realize through discrimination that "I am the pure *Brahman,*" completely separate from them all.
>
> *Shankara, Ātmabodha 14, 31*

Avidyā is contrasted with *vidyā* or knowledge, implying mystic knowledge, experience or *gnosis.* Hence, Swāmī Nikhilānanda observes that all the apparent knowledge of this world is actually ignorance. In fact, the very 'I' which thinks it has acquired that knowledge is an illusion of *avidyā:*

> All knowledge of the phenomenal world, which is the product of *avidyā,* is called ignorance. The realization of the identity of *Brahman* and *ātman* is alone called *vidyā* or knowledge.... The self *(ātman)* becomes identified with the intellect *(buddhi)* on account of *avidyā.* It appears to think, move about, and act in other ways, like a light which appears to be coloured when reflected in a coloured object.
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, U3 pp.53 (n.9), 62*

Ignorance commonly masquerades as knowledge. That is, those who have some superficial knowledge of this world – scientific, religious, philosophical or of any other kind – often consider themselves to be wise and knowledgable. But in fact, all intellectual knowledge, or knowledge derived from an intellectual analysis of sensory phenomena, is ignorance when perceived from the mystic viewpoint. Thus, the *Kaṭha Upanishad* says:

Fools, dwelling in the midst of ignorance *(avidyā),*
yet considering themselves wise and learned,
go round and round, staggering to and fro,
like the blind led by the blind.

Kaṭha Upanishad 1:2.5; cf. Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:2.8

All human suffering also arises from *avidyā:*

All desires imply duality, which is the result of *avidyā.* They produce sorrow, because all objects of enjoyment are impermanent. One experiences grief when they disappear, and boredom if they remain too long.... All dualistic experiences, whether from an external object or from a mental state, are created by *avidyā.*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Gauḍapāda, Kārikā 3:43, 45, on Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, U2 pp.308–10

It is also *avidyā* which is responsible for the transmigration of the soul:

Children, immersed in ignorance *(avidyā)* in various ways,
flatter themselves, saying:
"We have accomplished life's purpose."
Because these performers of *karma* do not know the Truth
owing to their attachment,
they fall from heaven, misery stricken,
when the fruit of their work is exhausted.

Ignorant fools, regarding sacrifices and humanitarian works
as the highest, do not know any higher good.
Having enjoyed their reward in the heights of heaven,
gained by good works,
they again enter this world or a lower one.

Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:2.9–10, U1 pp.273–74

The self (*ātman,* soul) transmigrates by successively discarding the body and organs already possessed, and taking new ones, hundreds of them, in an unbroken series. The transmigration of the self *(ātman)* is attributable to its identification with name and form, created by *avidyā.* It is not the natural state of the self *(ātman).*

Swāmī Nikhilānanda, on Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:3.7, U3 p.265

Saints have described *avidyā* in a manner similar to that of the *Upanishads* and *Vedānta.* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh says that intellectual knowledge *(vidyā)* is really ignorance in comparison to mystic knowledge:

O knowledge *(vidyā)*, you are a great ignorance *(avidyā)*:
you have not known the true value of the Saints.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:3.1, SBP p.209

In general, Saints keep their language simple because they are talking to simple people, not to the learned or to those well versed in sacred writings. To the Saints, everyone in this world and in the entire creation is suffering from *avidyā*, and they analyse the matter little further than that:

O Lord, due to ignorance *(avidyā)*
my lamp of discretion has become dirty....
O Lord, due to ignorance *(avidyā)*
I have not repeated your Name.
Ravidās, Vāṇī 47:3, 48:1, SGRV p.89

Bring the sunshine of the Lord's Name *(Hari Nām)* to your heart,
so that the glow-worm of hypocrisy
and the night of ignorance *(avidyā)* are completely destroyed.
Tulsīdās, Bārahmāsī, Bhādon 5–6, TDB p.2

You have wasted your human birth,
and now that *Kāl* has come (for you), you weep.
But what can be done now,
when you have been sleeping in ignorance *(avidyā)*?
Charaṇdās, Bānī 2, Mishrit Shabd 29:1–3, CDB2 p.40

See also: **spiritual ignorance**.

1. Sadānanda, *Vedāntasāra* 2:54.

axe A metaphor associated with that of the tree as a term for the soul. In the Manichaean psalms, for instance, there is an interesting passage that is immediately reminiscent of a verse which appears in both Matthew and Luke. Speaking of the Saviour, the psalmist writes:

You are the two-edged axe
wherewith they cut the bitter root....
You are the vineyard of my Father, the Living Spirit.
Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.178

In contrast to the sweet root of the Tree of Life, the Master is here praised as the one who cuts the "bitter root" of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and

Evil, of the devil. In this context, the "vineyard" is the place where the souls – the 'vines' – flower and fruit under the care of the Living Spirit. The gospel parallel, attributed to John the Baptist, reads:

> And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees:
> Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit
> is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
>
> *Matthew 3:10, KJV*

Bearing in mind the Manichaean text, the meaning would seem to be that every person has within himself the root of the Tree of Life as well as the root of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. By baptism, an "axe is laid unto the root of the Tree" of Good and Evil, and it is completely uprooted.

The verse from Matthew, however, is ambiguous, and could also symbolize each human being as a "tree". Taken in this way, the meaning would be that a "tree" or human being who yields no spiritual harvest is "hewn down" – dies – and is forced to take another birth in the "fire" of the physical creation. Either way, tree and axe are certainly intended as metaphors, since no one suggests that John the Baptist cut down trees in the desert.

There is an interesting passage in the Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Philip*, which supports the former interpretation. Speaking of digging up and exposing the root of sin, the writer continues:

> That is why the word says, "Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees."[1] It will not merely cut – what is cut sprouts again – but the axe penetrates deeply until it brings up the root. Jesus pulled out the root of the whole place, while others did it only partially.
>
> *Gospel of Philip 83, NHS20 pp.208–9*

Which interpretation is correct is by no means certain. In one of the Manichaean psalms, the souls are likened to the "blooming trees of the land of light".[2] Another psalm portrays souls as a "vine", where there is a further allusion to the passage found in Matthew and Luke. Here, it is clear that the trees which are cut down are interpreted as souls which bear no spiritual fruit:

> The holy Living Vine which you have …
> I am the vine, … my Father is the husbandman.
> Every branch that shall give bad fruit is cut with its root,
> and is cast into the fire … because it gives not good fruit.
>
> The trees that sprout and blossom and are full of fruit:
> these I have given to you, my Husbandman.

> They are prayer (meditation), abstinence (self-discipline),
> charity, love towards [God and His creation].
> Henceforth, give them as a gift … of Truth.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXXI; cf. MPB p.91*

John the Baptist's saying is ambiguous, and it seems that early Christians and the mystically minded of those times interpreted the passage in either way, or both.

See also: **Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil** (6.1), **Tree of Life** (3.1), **vines** (5.1).

1. *Matthew* 3:10.
2. *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB* p.144.

āyinah-khānah (P) *Lit.* house *(khānah)* of mirrors *(āyinah);* hall of mirrors. Sufis describe the body, the physical universe and the realms immediately above the physical, as an *āyinah-khānah.* This is because when the organs of perception are imperfect, only a reflected and distorted view of reality can be perceived. The grosser the organs of perception, the greater the distortion.

See also: **mirror** (5.1).

Babel (He. *Bavel*) A legendary city, commonly presumed to refer to Babylon, famous from *Genesis*[1] as the place where *Yahweh* is said to have poured confusion upon those building a tower to reach Him, by making them all speak in different languages.

The derivation is generally understood to be from the Akkadian *Bab-Ilu* (Gate of God). Some of the rabbis, however, whose writings and sayings are found in the *Mishnah,* derived it from the Hebrew root *balal* (to mix, to confuse), though this is clearly a contrived etymology.

The biblical story is vague and brief, with no names mentioned as the ringleaders. But legend has it that the project was sanctioned by Nimrod, described in *Genesis* as a great grandson of Noah, whose kingdom included the great Babylonian cities of Babylon, Nineveh and Uruk. Nimrod was something of a legendary character, and *Genesis* quotes a popular saying of the times, "like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the eyes of *Yahweh*".[2]

The building of the tower itself is regarded in the *Midrash* and other traditional Jewish texts as an act of rebellion against God. It is also said that the people of the time wanted to ensure that God did not send another flood,

and that they thought they could somehow prevent this by splitting the sky with the tower. But these explanations are unsatisfying. Other interpretations suggest that the story represents the beginning of the period of idol worship. Before that, it is said that all people spoke one language, meaning God's language. Other legends teach that in its very construction, it embodied ruthless cruelty to the labourers, and thus displeased God. Generally speaking, in Jewish literature, the story of the Tower of Babel is taken to symbolize the rebellion of the human ego against the divine will, and to epitomize the human presumption that man can reach God by his own means.

A number of traditional expansions on the story are included in the *Midrash* and *Talmud*. A late *midrash,* for instance, speaks of one primal and sacred language by which the world was created and by which human beings communicated before becoming separated by the "impulse to evil":

> (The Holy One said:) "Come, let us go down, and there confound their language."[3] He confounded their language, so that one did not understand the language of the other. The first language they had been speaking was the sacred tongue, by which the world had been created.
>
> So the Holy One said: "In this world, because of the impulse to evil, my creatures have been separated, and have become divided into seventy languages. But in the time to come, all of them will come as one to call upon my Name and worship me, as is said, 'Then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that they will all invoke the Lord by name, and serve Him with one accord.'[4]"
>
> *Midrash Tanḥuma, Noah 22, in BLBR p.376:22*

Another story is retold by Louis Ginzberg:

> The iniquity and godlessness of Nimrod reached their climax in the building of the Tower of Babel. His counsellors had proposed the plan of erecting such a tower, Nimrod had agreed to it, and it was executed in Shinar by a mob of six hundred thousand men. The enterprise was neither more nor less than rebellion against God, and there were three sorts of rebels among the builders.
>
> The first party spoke: "Let us ascend into the heavens and wage warfare with Him." The second party spoke: "Let us ascend into the heavens, set up our idols, and pay worship unto them there." And the third party spoke: "Let us ascend into the heavens, and ruin them with our bows and spears."
>
> Many, many years were passed in building the tower. It reached so great a height that it took a year to mount to the top. A brick was, therefore, more precious in the sight of the builders than a human being. If a man fell down, and met his death, none took notice of it,

but if a brick dropped, they wept, because it would take a year to replace it. So intent were they upon accomplishing their purpose that they would not permit a woman to interrupt herself in her work of brick making when the hour of travail came upon her. Moulding bricks she gave birth to her child, and, tying it round her body in a sheet, she went on moulding bricks.

They never slackened in their work, and from their dizzy height they constantly shot arrows toward heaven, which, returning were seen to be covered with blood. They were thus fortified in their delusion, and they cried, "We have slain all who are in heaven."

Thereupon, God turned to the seventy angels who encompass His throne, and He spake: "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their languages that they may not understand one another's speech." Thus it happened. Thenceforth, none knew what the other spoke. One would ask for the mortar, and the other handed him a brick; in a rage, he would throw the brick at his partner and kill him. Many perished in this manner, and the rest were punished according to the nature of their rebellious conduct.

Those who had spoken, "Let us ascend into the heavens, set up our idols, and pay worship unto them there," God transformed into apes and phantoms. Those who had proposed to assault the heavens with their arms, God set against each other so that they fell in the combat. And those who had resolved to carry on a combat with God in heaven were scattered broadcast over the earth. As for the unfinished tower, a part sank into the earth, and another part was consumed by fire; only one third of it remained standing.

The place of the tower has never lost its peculiar quality. Whoever passes it forgets all he knows.

The punishment inflicted upon the sinful generation of the tower is comparatively lenient. On account of rapine, the generation of the flood were utterly destroyed, while the generation of the tower were preserved in spite of their blasphemies and all their other acts offensive to God. The reason is that God sets a high value upon peace and harmony. Therefore, the generation of the deluge, who gave themselves up to depredation, and bore hatred to one another, were extirpated, root and branch, while the generation of the Tower of Babel dwelling amicably together, and loving one another, were spared alive, at least a remnant of them.

"The Tower of Babel", from Midrashic Sources, in LB pp.84–85, LJCD

Allusions to the story also appear in early Christian and gnostic texts. In the *Robe of Glory*, for example, an allegorical poem found in the *Acts of Thomas*, Babel is used for the domain of the negative power. The epithet is aptly

chosen: the universal mind, the devil, is the power which is responsible for the apparent or illusory division of the one Word into the countless forms, rhythms and patterns experienced in the physical universe which distract the soul, keeping it away from God. Giving geographical place names to the various regions of creation, the descent of the soul to the physical world (Egypt) is briefly described:

I passed the borders of Maishān,
the meeting place of the merchants of the East;
And I reached the land of Babel,
and I entered the walls of Sarbug.
I went down into Egypt.

Robe of Glory 18–20, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA pp.239–40, ANT p.412, HS pp.14–15

The soul leaves its home, and passing through the purely spiritual regions (Maishān) comes to the realm of Babel, symbolic of the negative power. Later on in this poem, the soul is sent a "letter" (the Word) sealed by the King (God) with His "right hand", another metaphor for the Word, symbolizing the true path to God, to "keep it from … the children of Babel":

And my letter was a letter
which the King had sealed with His right hand,
to keep it from the wicked ones, the children of Babel,
and from the tyrannous demons of Sarbug.

Robe of Glory 49–50, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.241, ANT p.413, HS pp.20–21

The "children of Babel" are the powers and forces, the *archons* in the realms or *aeons* of the negative power who distract souls from following the path of the Word; or perhaps they are those in this world who misinterpret the teachings of the mystics, thereby hindering souls in their search for the path to the Divine. Correspondingly, on the return journey to God, the soul ascends past the realm of "Babel":

I went forth, passed by Sarbug,
I left Babel on my left hand.

Robe of Glory 69, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.242, ANT p.414, HS pp.24–25

Here, Babel is said to be on the "left hand", symbolizing the path that leads down into creation, away from God. The *Acts of Thomas* employs imagery similar to that used by the followers of Mānī, and it is possible that it was written by a later Manichaean or one following a similar path. Mānī, for example, wrote:

A thankful disciple am I,
  risen from Babel's land.
Risen am I from the land of Babel (the negative power),
  and standing (now) at the door of Truth.
I am a singer, a disciple
  who was led out of the land of Babel.
I was led out of the land of Babel
  in order to cry out a Cry in the world.

Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.51ff., RMP cv;
cf. GSR p.148:2.5, ML pp.8–9, MM p.24, SCMP p.114

Often taken as an autobiographical comment regarding his birth in Babylon, the imagery leads to the supposition that he is actually speaking symbolically and from a mystical point of view. He is a "thankful disciple" because he has been spiritually raised up by his Master and taken out of this world – the "land of Babel" – to the "door of Truth".

See also: **Babylon**, **Egypt**.

1. *Genesis* 11:1–10.
2. *Genesis* 10:8–9, *JB*.
3. *Genesis* 11:7.
4. *Zephaniah* 3:9.

Babylon The chief city of ancient Mesopotamia, first settled around 3000 BCE. A term sometimes used for the physical universe, the allusion being to the Babylonian exile and slavery of the children of Israel (*c*.597–538 BCE). Even in modern times, Babylon is used to exemplify decadence and depravity, hallmarks of the physical universe. In Protestant polemic, Babylon is a name for the Roman Catholic Church.

The metaphor was also used by the Mandaeans. Underlining their Judaic origins is a Mandaean story in which a Saviour – a "Healer of souls" – is sent into this world, symbolized as Babylon:

I set forth, came and reached the gates of Babylon.
Of the children of Babylon,
  there were some who shut their doors on seeing me.
There were those who shut their doors,
  and there were those who opened their doors.

Those who shut their doors,
  hated Life and loved death.

> They loved death and hated Life,
> and will be held back in the abode of darkness.
>
> Those who opened their doors
> loved Life and hated death.
> They hated death and loved Life:
> They will rise up in purity,
> and will behold the place of light.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 164, CPM p.143*

The Saviour comes to the world, "the gates of Babylon", the physical realm, the "abode of darkness". But he receives a mixed response. Some shut their doors to him – they are lovers of the death and darkness of this world. Others open their doors to him – they are lovers of the Divine, of Life: "They will rise up in purity, and will behold the place of light": they will return to God and merge back into Him.

See also: **Babel**.

bāṭil (A/P) *Lit.* vain, false, baseless; a deception, a lie, a nullity; that which is null and void; in Sufi terms, all that which is not God.

bhai jal, **bhau jal** (Pu) *Lit.* waters *(jal)* of fear *(bhai, bhau);* waters of dread, dreadful ocean, sea of fear; metaphorically, the sea or ocean of this world.

See also: **bhav sāgar**.

bhai sāgar (H/Pu), **bhau sāgar** (Pu) *Lit.* ocean *(sāgar)* of fear *(bhai, bhau);* ocean of dread, awesome ocean; the sea or ocean of this world:

> The whole world is engrossed in self-adoration,
> worldly attachment and self-conceit:
> The Lord has Himself mercifully shaken them off from me.
> Says Nānak, I have ferried across the dreadful world ocean *(bhai sāgar)*
> and my affairs are accomplished.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 782, MMS*

In this imagery, the Master is the captain of a ship who takes souls from one side of the ocean of this world to the other. His ship is the Sound Current or Word of God, and the fare to be paid by his disciples is the complete surrender of their ego.

See also: **bhav sāgar**.

bhav(a) jal(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* waters *(jal)* of existence *(bhav);* hence, the ocean of existence; the waters of worldly life; an expression used by Indian mystics for the physical universe, as a stormy ocean in which souls are tossed about without any control of their direction:

> Contemplating the Lord God,
> man crosses the dreadful world ocean *(bhav jal),*
> and all his desires are fulfilled.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 781, MMS*

See also: **bhav sāgar**.

bhav(a) sāgar(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* ocean *(sāgar)* of existence *(bhav);* ocean of life, ocean of this world, ocean of phenomena; used by Indian mystics for this world, teeming with every kind of diverse phenomenon and variety of existence. It is vast in extent, continually heaving and shifting, a place where souls are constantly submerged by the affairs and vicissitudes of life, constantly returning to the same arena in life after life.

Every particle of existence is in constant motion, like waves in water. Man is like a piece of wood who rises and falls with the waves whether he likes it or not. He floats on the waves, not knowing what he is doing or where he will go next. 'Ināyat Khān explains the metaphor in detail:

> How true it is, as the Eastern poets have always said, "Life is a *bhav sāgar:* an ocean into which all things are drawn, fall and are absorbed." It sweeps away all the plants and trees, animals and birds, and all that lies in the path of the flood; all are borne away into the ocean. Such is the force and power of the ocean.
>
> Similarly, this life sweeps away all the trees and plants, animals and men. Everything that we see is here only for the moment, and then is swept away. There is always a certain period after which the things that seemed so enduring have all disappeared. Our ancestors, if they came back, would not recognize the country, the houses, the trees, the manners; everything would be different. All that was familiar to them has been swept away. That is the story of this life. That is why it is called *māyā,* the illusion created before us like a dream in the night. In the morning, it has all gone. All the happiness, unhappiness, pleasures, horrors, whatever we experience in the night, we perceive in the morning to have been a dream.

> The whole of creation, when we come to think of it, is not in the end what we have thought it was; manners, customs, faces – everything changes. That is the condition of life. It is just like the sea. The tide comes, and it sweeps all before it, flowers, fruit and all. Therefore, life is pictured by the thinkers of the East as an ocean into which everything is swept.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK7 pp.183–84*

And:

> Great devotees have constantly prayed to be liberated, that they may not sink in this ocean, but may be able to swim in it.à It is the master spirit which can rise above these waves of the immense ocean of life in which souls are generally drowned. To be in it, and yet to be able to stand above it and to walk on it, is the phenomenon of Christ's walking upon the water.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.222*

The expression has been used by many Indian mystics. *Bhav sāgar* is the playground of *Kāl,* the lord of time and death:

> *Kāl* is enjoying *Holī* (the festival of colours)
> in the ocean of existence *(bhav sāgar).*
> He assumes many varied colours
> to take away the life of creatures,
> showing scant regard for youth and age,
> caring little whether it be day or night.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Mishrit Pad, Rāg Horī 1–3, SBB pp.55–56*

All souls are drowning in this ocean:

> I am drowning in this ocean of existence *(bhav sāgar):*
> O Lord, please take care of me!
>
> *Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Virah aur Prem 9:2, MBS p.29*

The solution, say the mystics, is to fix the mind and soul on God:

> By remembering the Lord,
> you can cross the ocean of existence *(bhav sāgar).*
>
> *Malūkdās, Bānī, Shabd 7:4, MDB p.17*

> O man, thou shalt not again attain the human body:
> make some effort for thy deliverance.

Says Nānak, sing thou the praise of the embodiment of compassion,
and cross the terrible world ocean *(bhav sāgar).*

Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 220, MMS

Specifically, the soul must contact the mystic Name, the creative Power:

I will board the ship of the Lord's Name,
and will cross the ocean of existence *(bhav sāgar).*

Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 29:3, MBS p.57

But such remembrance is not in the hands of the individual. It is a gift of God:

This creation is a vast ocean of existence *(bhav sāgar),*
far worse than the time of dissolution.
Only he whom the Lord protects
will be saved from drowning.

Malūkdās, Bānī, Shabd 3:4, MDB p.15

See also: **storm**.

bhram(a) (S/H), **bharam** (H/Pu) *Lit.* superstition, doubt, suspicion, disbelief, uncertainty, misgiving, delusion, error, mistake, illusion. Man's inner attention, when deeply concentrated within, can perceive with complete certainty the manner by which the creation is projected, and the means by which things happen. For most people, however, the inner attention is scattered into the world. The attention of the mind is thus diffused, lost, absorbed, and identified with the passing show.

This is why most human beings are lost in a mental haze of uncertainty, doubt, false beliefs, superstitions, illusion and suspicion. In the absence of clear and correct perception, man lives in self-doubt and confusion, however good an act the individual may put on. From a spiritual viewpoint, this is *bhrama.* Only inner concentration of the mind and an awareness of God's presence can bring certainty, confidence, knowledge, correct understanding, faith and reality:

This world is led astray by doubt *(bharam),*
and only a rare one understands this.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 558, MMS

Yam (the lord of death) has made me suffer greatly
in the many forms of life:

Without practising *bhajan* (meditation),
I have been wandering about in uncertainty *(bharam).*
Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 14:1, SSR p.128

His doubt and misgiving *(bharam)* are shattered,
and he ever sees the Lord.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 810, MMS

See also: **Error, illusion, māyā.**

bhujang(a) (S/H/Pu), **bhuiang**, **bhuiangam** (Pu) *Lit.* snake, serpent; metaphorically, *māyā* (illusion):

O mother, the world is surrounded
by the poisonous snake and serpent *(bhuiangam)* of *māyā.*
The antidote of this poison is the Lord's Name *(Hari Nām).*
Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1415, MMS

And:

The serpent *(bhuiang)* of *māyā* has seized the mortal:
Through the *Guru*'s hymns (*Bachan,* Word),
the Lord neutralizes the poison.
Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 697, MMS

The term is also used for the *kuṇḍalinī,* and also as a metaphor for the disciple who is transformed from a poisonous snake into a loving soul.

See also: **bhujang** (▸2), **māyā**, **serpent** (6.1).

bhūl (H/Pu) *Lit.* error, delusion, forgetfulness; the condition of man and all souls in the physical universe. They are deluded into taking the world as real and are forgetful of the Creator. Many mystics have used the expression, as for instance:

The entire world is lost
in deceit *(bhūl)* and delusion *(bharam).*
That which is unique appeals to nobody.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 8:13.2, SBP p.82

On seeing the form, be thou not misled (*bhūl,* in delusion), O fool:
false is the world's love for lust.

None is allowed to stay in this world:
ever stable (eternal) is the one Lord *(Nārāyaṇ)* alone.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1077, MMS

See also: **bhrama**, **cup of forgetfulness** (6.3), **forgetfulness**, **ghaflah**.

blindness Inability to see, lacking the faculty of sight; thus, metaphorically, spiritual blindness; being unable to see God within or to experience anything of the inner light. Spiritual blindness also means nescience, being ignorant even of the existence of a higher, spiritual reality. As Jesus is credited with saying in the *Apocryphon of John:*

The whole creation was made blind,
in order that they may not know God
who is above all of them.
And because of the chain of forgetfulness,
their sins were hidden.
Apocryphon of John 28, NHS33 p.161

The metaphor has been used by many mystics in a variety of ways. In the Christian gospels, Jesus refers to the Pharisees as "ye blind guides",[1] "ye fools and blind",[2] and "blind leaders of the blind",[3] adding that "if the blind shall lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."[4] In the *Gospel of Thomas*, he speaks of everyone in the world as blind:

My soul grieves over the sons of men,
because they are blind in their heart,
and see not.
Gospel of Thomas 38:28; cf. NHS20 pp.64–65, OLAG p.50

In John's gospel, using a play on the meaning of seeing and blindness, Jesus says:

For judgment I am come into this world,
that they which see not might see;
And that they which see might be made blind.
John 9:39, KJV

He means that he has come to give sight to those who are blind to the spiritual reality, and to take away the sight of those who only see the world – to turn their attention away from the world towards the spiritual reality.

Similarly, in Matthew, Jesus says that people see him and hear his

parables, but they do not really see him for who he is, nor do they understand the meaning of his parables:

> Therefore speak I to them in parables:
> Because they seeing see not,
> and hearing they hear not,
> neither do they understand.
>
> *Matthew 13:13, KJV*

Jesus is alluding to a passage from the prophet Isaiah, which he then quotes:

> And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith,
> "By hearing ye shall hear,
> and shall not understand;
> And seeing ye shall see,
> and shall not perceive:
>
> "For this people's heart is waxed gross,
> and their ears are dull of hearing,
> and their eyes they have closed;
> Lest at any time they should see with their eyes,
> and hear with their ears,
> and should understand with their heart,
> and should be converted, and I should heal them."
>
> *Matthew 13:14–15, KJV; cf. Isaiah 6:9–10*

In John's gospel, too, clearly echoing Isaiah, Jesus again says:

> He (God) hath blinded their eyes,
> and hardened their heart;
> That they should not see with their eyes,
> nor understand with their heart,
> and be converted, and I should heal them.
>
> *John 12:40, KJV*

Isaiah and Jesus are both comparing spiritual vision, hearing and understanding with the vision of those whose attention is captured entirely by the things of this world. Jesus then continues, speaking to his disciples:

> But blessed are your eyes, for they see:
> and your ears, for they hear.
> For verily I say unto you,
> that many prophets and righteous men

have desired to see those things which ye see,
and have not seen them;
And to hear those things which ye hear,
and have not heard them.

Matthew 13:16–17, KJV

He tells them that many spiritually and mystically minded people have struggled hard – but to no avail – to experience those things within themselves that they have experienced.

Again, in Luke's gospel, on a trip to Galilee, Luke relates that Jesus visits a synagogue, and reads from another place in *Isaiah* where the prophet says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he hath anointed me
to preach the gospel to the poor;
He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
to preach deliverance to the captives,
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty them that are bruised,
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18–19, KJV; cf. Isaiah 61:1–2

According to Luke, Jesus reads this passage as a prophecy concerning himself but, in fact, Isaiah is simply saying what all mystics both before and since have said. A Saviour is anointed and appointed by God. He is an incarnation of the Spirit of the Lord or the Word who has come to teach the "poor", the spiritually humble; to heal those who are "brokenhearted" – who are suffering in this world due to separation from God; to free those who are held captive in the domain of Satan; to give liberation to those who are "bruised" and buffeted from life here; to give sight to the spiritually blind; and to teach that now is the "acceptable year of the Lord" – now is the time to search for God.

Isaiah seems to have been fond of the metaphor, for elsewhere, he also says, speaking metaphorically:

I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not;
I will lead them in paths that they have not known:
I will make darkness light before them,
and crooked things straight.
These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them....
Hear, ye deaf;
And look, ye blind, that ye may see.

Isaiah 42:16, 18, KJV

And again:

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,
and the deaf that have ears.
Isaiah 43:8, KJV

See also: **andhā**, **deafness**, **drunkenness**, **dumbness**.

1. *Matthew* 23:24.
2. *Matthew* 23:16, 17, 19.
3. *Matthew* 15:14.
4. *Matthew* 15:14.

bridge A structure providing a passage over a road, a river, a railway and so on; metaphorically, this world, observed by mystics to be only a temporary dwelling. According to Islamic tradition:

Jesus son of Mary (on whom be peace) said:
"The world is a bridge:
pass over it, but build no house upon it.
Who hopes for an hour, hopes for eternity.
The world is an hour:
spend it in prayer, for the rest is unseen."
Inscription at the Jāmi' Masjid, Fatehpur, IA p.98

The saying is preserved as an inscription over the central arch of the huge and impressive gateway which served as the southern entrance to the Jāmi' Masjid (congregational mosque) at Fatehpur, built near the village of Sīkrī by the great Mughul ruler, Akbar the Great (1542–1605), as his new capital. It was a message from the Emperor to all who read it of the world's impermanence; that spiritual life is what really matters. Inside the gateway, and dwarfed by the mosque itself, is the tomb of Akbar's spiritual Master, Shaykh Salīm Chishtī of the *Chishtīyah* order of Sufis, who trace their origins to the mystic Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī and include such well-known Sufis as Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, Shaykh Farīd and Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā'.

In the case of Fatehpur, the inscription was poignantly apt. Akbar left his capital in August 1585 to meet a threat to his northwestern frontier posed by 'Abd al-Allāh Khān Uzbeg. Subsequently, needing a more secure base, he established himself in the fortress at Agra, returning to Fatehpur only very briefly in 1599. Built in a dry area, the city had serious water supply problems, despite a large reservoir built by Akbar, and by the time Englishman

William Finch arrived in 1610, it had become an uninhabited ghost town. As rapidly as it had been built, it had fallen into ruin.[1]

The metaphor of the world as a bridge is common. Ḥāfiẓ writes:

O heart, be not attached to this world *(dunyā):*
nobody lives on a bridge *(pul)!*

Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM p.525, DIH p.477

And, more expansively:

Whoever came to this tumultuous world *(jahān),*
it is necessary for him to go to the tomb.
On the path to the next world *('uqbá),*
this world is like a bridge *(pul)* –
A place void of permanency, a stage desolate.

Set not your heart on this fearful bridge *(pul):*
make provision (for the next world),
be no dweller here.
In the opinion of wise men,
this transitory mansion is a waste place,
void of treasure.

Truly, those holy men
who have called this house an inn
have pierced the pearl of Truth.
It is not fit for a permanent dwelling: Abandon it!
Stay far away from wealth and status:
for property is a snake and status, a pit.

Even if you were Bahrām Gūr, in the end,
you would still fall into the snare of the grave.
I tell you, "If you are not blind, behold the grave."
I tell you: "Sit not (spiritually) idle for a moment."

No one receives help at the time (of death):
Whether he play the part of a beggar, of a king,
of the young or of the old.
You who, tucking in your coat, pass by (these words),
Ḥāfiẓ keeps hoping this: Read the *al-Ḥamd.*

Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHM p.555, DIH p.453; cf. DHWC (690:1–11) pp.998–99

The *al-Ḥamd* is a verse from the *Qur'ān,* commonly read at a grave side.

See also: **caravanserai**.

1. See S.M. Burke, *Akbar the Greatest Moghul*, *AGMB* pp.193–96.

caravanserai (P. *kārvānsarāy*) From the Persian *kārvān* (caravan, a company of travellers) and *sarāy* (a large inn or resting place); a large inn for caravans in some Eastern countries, especially in the past, generally enclosing a large courtyard to provide safety for the camels and baggage belonging to the travellers; a stopover point for parties of travellers; metaphorically, this world, where all are travellers and no one stays forever – souls arrive at birth and depart at death, with no one knowing when the day of departure will be.

Inns and hostels were commonly built by rulers as safe houses for travellers on main communication routes through their kingdoms, in order to encourage trade and foster unity within their realms. There were, of course, many privately owned inns, especially in the major cities.

Being a temporary dwelling or resting place, many mystics have described both this world and the body as a caravanserai, since all incarnate souls are travellers on the journey towards death. Mahārāj Sāwan Singh says:

> Let those who are proud of family and its members see with their open eyes the value of getting entangled in the attachment of children and lured by their sweet talk and antics. Man is like a guest for the night who has to leave in the morning. Being here for a night, it is useless to build schemes for ages. Houses, temples and wealth change like the shade of a tree. This world is like a *sarāy* visited by persons who constantly give place to others. Body, son, wife, family, etc., which he considers eternal, are with him for a few days only and would then have to be given up. None of these would accompany him. It is therefore useless and in vain to be proud of them. These are like a dream.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Philosophy of the Masters 3, PM3 pp.162–63*

Rūmī writes that attachment to this temporary world means the anguish of separation from the permanent, divine dwelling:

> Union with this world is separation from that world.
> The health of this body is the sickness of the spirit.
> It is hard to be separated from this caravanserai –
>   so know that separation from that permanent abode is harder!
> Since it is hard for you to be separated from the painting,
>   think what it will be to be parted from the Painter!
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3209–11, in SPL p.245; cf. MJR4 p.449*

The story is told by 'Aṭṭār of how the saintly Ibrāhīm ibn Adham came to understand this reality:

> Ibrāhīm ibn Adham's saintly career began in the following manner. He was king of Balkh, and a whole world was under his command; forty gold swords and forty gold maces were carried before and behind him. One night he was asleep on his royal couch. At midnight, the roof of the apartment vibrated, as if someone was walking on the roof.
>
> "Who is there?" he shouted.
>
> "A friend," came the reply "I have lost a camel, and am searching for it on this roof."
>
> "Fool, do you look for the camel on the roof?" cried Ibrāhīm.
>
> "Heedless one," answered the voice, "do you seek for God in silken clothes, asleep on a golden couch?"
>
> These words filled his heart with terror. A fire blazed within him, and he could not sleep any more. When day came he returned to the dais and sat on his throne, thoughtful, bewildered and full of care. The ministers of state stood each in his place; his slaves were drawn up in serried ranks. General audience was proclaimed.
>
> Suddenly, a man with awful mien entered the chamber, so terrible to look upon that none of the royal retinue and servants dared ask him his name; the tongues of all clove to their throats. He advanced solemnly till he stood before the throne.
>
> "What do you want?" demanded Ibrāhīm.
>
> "I have just alighted at this caravanserai," said the man.
>
> "This is not a caravanserai; this is my palace; you are mad," shouted Ibrāhīm.
>
> "Who owned this palace before you?" asked the man.
>
> "My father," Ibrāhīm replied.
>
> "And before him?"
>
> "My grandfather."
>
> "And before him?"
>
> "So-and-so."
>
> "And before him?"
>
> "The father of so-and-so."
>
> "Where have they all departed?" asked the man.
>
> "They have gone. They are dead," Ibrāhīm replied.
>
> "Then is this not a caravanserai which one man enters and another leaves?"
>
> *'Aṭṭār, Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 1, TAN1 p.86, MSM pp.63–64*

See also: **bridge**.

chhal(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* illusion, deception, delusion, deceit; also, illusory, deceitful; one of the many words used to describe the nature of this world:

> I have broken off with the deceitful *(chhal)* ... she-serpent (of *māyā*):
> the *Guru* has told me that she is false and fraudulent.
> From her countenance, she seems sweet, but she tastes bitter:
> with the Lord's Name Nectar *(Amrit Nām)*,
> my soul (*man,* mind) is satiated.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1347, MMS*

Chhal also implies self-deception and the intention to deceive others:

> Abandon your deceit *(chhal),* your crookedness, your cunning:
> why let yourself sink so low?
> Practise remembrance *(simran),* serve your Master,
> and ascend today to the (inner) sky.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:5.10–11, SBP p.117*

See also: **bhrama**, **Error**, **māyā**.

chitriṇī (S/H) *Lit.* she who is enchanting and dazzling; from *chitra* (wonderful, variegated); a beautiful, brilliant and multitalented woman; one of four kinds of woman according to writers on Hindu eroticism, the other three being *padmiṇī, shankhinī* and *hastinī* or *kariṇī. Māyā* is often portrayed as the enchanting, alluring temptress. 'Ināyat Khān describes the characteristics of *chitriṇī:*

> *Chitriṇī* is beautiful and brilliant. She is happy amongst women, but prefers the friendship of the opposite sex. She is affectionate by nature, and desires affection. Her voice is music, a song; and there is poetry in her words. She is not so idealistic as *padmiṇī,* but she is refined and skilled in manner, and delightful and amusing in expressing her likes and dislikes. She herself loves but one man, though her manner may show another that he might perhaps be able to win her love too. She is vain and she is modest; she is bold and she is exclusive. She plays at hide-and-seek with her lover. Her swift glance, a lift of her eyebrows, her slightest gesture, a movement of a hand or a shoulder, will convey her thought or mood as no words can. She expresses her love, and wins her lover's heart a thousand times over; and one straight look of her eyes draws his soul to the surface. She is controlled by him, and yet controls. She is with him, and yet apart. She is *māyā,* the elusive one. She is the pearl of his heart.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK3 p.136*

Chitriṇī is also a name given to the innermost channel within the *sushumṇā nāḍī,* the central current of *prāṇa* or life energy running down the spine.

corruption The condition of being corrupt; spiritually, this world, relating to the fact that nothing is permanent here, but is constantly undergoing change, decay and death; used in the sense of being liable to change and decay; contrasted with incorruption, meaning the eternity of God. St Paul seems to have been fond of the Greek equivalent of the expression. He describes material existence as the "bondage of corruption":

> The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
>
> *Romans 8:21–22, KJV*

He also says that the reward of worldliness is "corruption":

> Be not deceived; God is not mocked:
> for whatsoever a man soweth,
> that shall he also reap.
> For he that soweth to his flesh
> shall of the flesh reap corruption;
> But he that soweth to the spirit
> shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
>
> *Galatians 6:7–8, KJV*

The term was very commonly used in early Christian literature, as in an invocation to God in the *Acts of Thomas:*

> Lord of all orders of creation, which await You,
> and God of all spirits, which hope in You,
> (You) who deliver from Error Your human beings,
> freeing from corruption and from slavery
> those who obey You and come to Your place of refuge.
>
> *Acts of Thomas VII, AAA p.205*

See also: **captives** (6.3).

Dabūr (A/P) *Lit.* the name of the west wind. In the metaphors of Sufism, the east, the place of the rising sun, is associated with spirituality and the inner

light. The west, the place of sunset, is associated with the darker and more worldly aspects of life. Hence, the west wind, *Dabūr,* is a metaphor for sensual desires and worldliness; spiritual longings are termed *Ṣabā,* the name of the early morning breeze.

See also: **bāmdād** (▸2), **maghrib**.

darkness The absence of light; mystically, the normal condition of the mind and soul in this world, which are so distracted by the body, the physical senses and the affairs of worldly existence that the spiritual light within can no longer be seen, only darkness. Like being in the dark, no one in this world knows how they really got to where they are, where they are going, or what they are going to encounter next.

It is also a world of death. In one of the psalms, the psalmist writes of the human beings of this world who "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" because of the ego, the human I-ness that rebels against surrender to the divine will:

> Those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
>   bound in affliction and iron,
>   because they rebelled against the words of God,
>   and rejected the counsel of the Most High;
> And He brought down their heart with labour:
>   they fell down, and there was none to help.
> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
>   and He saved them from their distresses.
> He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
>   and broke their bonds asunder.
> Let them praise the Lord for His lovingkindness,
>   and for His wonderful works to the children of men!
>
> *Psalm 107:10–15, JCL*

The psalmist is echoing the words of Isaiah when speaking of the coming of a Messiah to this world:

> The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
> They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
>   upon them has the light shone.
>
> *Isaiah 9:1, KB; cf. Matthew 4:16*

Alluding to these words of Isaiah, the writer of John's gospel has Jesus say to his disciples:

I am the light of the world:
he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,
but shall have the light of life.

John 8:12, KJV

And likewise:

The light shineth in darkness,
and the darkness comprehended it not.

John 1:5, KJV

And as a Manichaean psalmist writes of his Master:

You are the exalted trophy,
the sign of light that puts darkness to flight.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:63; cf. MHCP pp.150–51

In all these extracts, "darkness" refers to the spiritual darkness of material existence. Among the Manichaean Chinese manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan, the unknown devotee prays to "Jesus *Buddha*" to forgive his sins, and to save him from birth and death. Here, it is clear that the "darkness" refers to this world, where souls may metaphorically be regarded as dead and "perished", in need of reanimation and enlightenment. "I am already in the darkness," says the writer:

O great Radiance for all that dwell in the dark, …
I have already perished: pray reanimate me;
I am already in the darkness: pray enlighten me.

Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.179:36–37

Using the same expression, in the revelational gnostic tractate, the *Apocryphon of John,* Jesus describes his descent to this world, to the "prison of the body", as entering "into the midst of darkness and the inside of *Hadēs*":

I entered into the midst of darkness
and the inside of *Hadēs*….
And I entered into the midst of their prison,
which is the prison of the body.

Apocryphon of John 30–31, NHS33 p.171

Being a natural and obvious metaphor, the term has been very commonly used by mystics and philosophers of all times and cultures. The first-century Roman

statesman, dramatist and Stoic philosopher, Seneca (*c*.4 BCE – 65 CE), also writes of the soul's escape from "darkness" and its "bodily prison":

> If the sun shines on a man through the mist, he may be glad that for a while he has escaped the darkness; but he does not yet enjoy the blessing of light. Our soul *(animus)* will have no reason for rejoicing in its lot until, freed from this darkness in which it gropes, it has not merely glimpsed the brightness with partial vision, but has absorbed the full light of day, and has been restored to the heavens where it belongs, recovering the place which is its birthright. It is summoned upward by its very origin, and it will reach that goal even before its bodily prison dissolves, as soon as it has cast off sin and, in purity and lightness, it flies upwards in divine contemplation.
>
> *Seneca, Letter 79; cf. SDL pp.11–12, SEM2 pp.206–7*

From another time and place, Sarmad, a seventeenth-century Jewish mystic who settled in India, observes:

> All day you are lost in the ocean *(daryā)* of avarice,
> sleeping all night in the darkness of heedlessness *(ghaflat);*
> The time of youth is over, old age has arrived:
> it is time to realize the beauties of the garden (of God).
>
> *Sarmad, Rubā'īyāt-i Sarmad 332; cf. RIS p.57*

And Rūmī (*d.*1273) writes in a similar vein:

> His creatures are in the darkness *(ẓulmat)*
> of vain imagination and opinion.
> Reverence is a prerequisite
> for this goodly Light to bestow a salve on these sightless ones.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:23–24; cf. MJR6 p.5*

The body and its senses feed on "darkness", he says, while the spirit feeds from the divine "Sun":

> The bodily sense is eating the food of darkness *(ẓulmat):*
> the spiritual sense is feeding from a Sun.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:51; cf. MJR2 p.224*

It is the divine Light, says Rūmī, which removes spiritual darkness:

> Strive that your doubts may decrease:
> go towards God in the night (of this world)....

In the dark night, seek the shining Day:
follow the darkness- *(ẓulmat)* consuming Reason *('Aql).*
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3689–90; cf. MJR2 p.200

See also: **andhakāra**, **blindness**, **outer darkness** (4.1), **timir**.

deafness The partial or complete inability to hear; metaphorically, spiritual ignorance, the inability to hear the call of the Spirit; a metaphor used by many mystics, in many languages, from many different times and places. The early Greek philosopher-mystic, Heraclitus (*c*.535–475 BCE), for example, likens the spiritual fool, one who is spiritually ignorant, to "the deaf". He hears the message of worldliness, but is deaf to the call of spirituality. They appear to be one thing, but are, in fact, the other:

Fools, although they hear,
are like the deaf;
To them the adage applies:
"present, but absent".
Heraclitus, Fragment 55; cf. HPW p.58

Only a century or two before, the Jewish prophet Isaiah (C8th BCE) had used a similar metaphor. In fact, he must have been fond of it, for he uses it in a number of places.[1] Speaking, for example, to those who have been unfaithful to God, he reminds them of their return to Him, when their spiritual faculties will be restored. Isaiah is speaking entirely in metaphors:

Be strong, fear not;
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
with a divine recompense; He will come and save you.
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap as a hart,
and the tongue of the dumb sing;
For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
and streams in the desert.
And the parched ground shall become a pool,
and the thirsty land springs of water;
The habitation of jackals shall become a pasture for cattle,
an enclosure of reeds and rushes.
And a highway shall be there, and a way,
and it shall be called the way of holiness;

The unclean shall not pass over it;
And He shall be to them a guide,
and fools shall not err in it.
Isaiah 35:4–8, JCL

Were it not for the latter verses, the passage could be taken as a prophecy of heaven on earth. But the "highway" and the "way of holiness" seem to be of an entirely spiritual nature, putting the remainder of the passage in a spiritual context.

Spiritual deafness is the inability of the soul to hear or pay heed to the message of spirituality or, more specifically, to hear the music of the Word. The expression is part of a family of mystic metaphors associated with healing and sickness, and is probably the origin of the Christian miracle stories in which Jesus heals the deaf. There are a number of passages in the Christian gospels where Jesus quotes Isaiah's promises of bringing sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and so on.[2] The sayings of Isaiah would have been well known in the Christian and Jewish worlds. Thus, in the Mandaean writings, the Word is depicted as the Tree of Life, which

is the sight of the blind
and the hearing and pleasure of the deaf.
It establishes speech in the mouths of the stammering,
and the deaf and the dumb.
Mandaean Prayer Book 375, CPM p.270

See also: **blindness, drunkenness**.

1. *e.g. Isaiah* 6:9–10, 29:18–19, 42:20, 61:1–2.
2. *e.g. John* 9:39, 12:40; *Matthew* 13:13–17; *Luke* 4:18–19.

death The end of all life functions in an organism; a metaphor for existence in this world, where the soul is so entangled with mind and matter that it is as if dead.

Biblical writers have commonly used death as a metaphor for the material world. In the twenty-third psalm, for instance, the psalmist is referring to this world when he describes the protection afforded by the Lord, his "shepherd":

Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.
Psalm 23:4, KJV

If existence in this world is death, then physical death must be a doorway to real life. Thus, 'life' often refers to real spiritual life in the heavenly regions – whether experienced while still in this world or after death. It may seem paradoxical, but mystics describe life in this world as death, and death (while still living or otherwise) as life. As Jesus says in John's gospel:

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word,
> and believeth on Him that sent me,
> hath everlasting life,
> and shall not come into condemnation;
> But is passed from death unto life.
>
> *John 5:24, KJV*

He means that the one who hears the Word of God passes from the death of this world to the life of eternity. Similarly, he says with the *double entendre* characteristic of John's gospel:

> Verily, verily, I say unto you,
> if a man keep my saying (Word),
> he shall never see death.
>
> *John 8:51, KJV*

Likewise, in the *Acts of John,* a young man, who – according to the allegorical story – has just been physically raised from the dead by the apostle John, recommends to those standing by:

> Ask the apostle of the Lord
> that just as he has raised me to life,
> he would raise you also from death unto salvation,
> and bring back your souls,
> which now are blotted out of the Book of Life.
>
> *Acts of John XVII; cf. ANT p.261*

The same idea is expressed in *Proverbs,* where Wisdom (the creative Power) 'speaks':

> For the man who finds me finds life,
> he will win favour from *Yahweh;*
> But he who does injury to me does hurt to his own soul;
> All who hate me are in love with death.
>
> *Proverbs 8:35–36, JB*

The idea of life in this world actually being a death is by no means new.

The Greek philosopher and mystic, Heraclitus (*c*.535–475 BCE), clearly fond of the wordplay suggested by the idea, wrote:

> Our life is death, and our death life.
>
> *Heraclitus, in Golden Verses of Pythagoras 52–53, HVP p.105*

And again:

> The name of the bow *(bios)* is life *(bios)*,
> but its work is death.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 115, HPW p.91*

A bow *(bios)*, he says, may have the appearance of life *(bios)*, but actually it is an instrument of death. Similarly, life in this world, though it is called life, is in fact spiritual death. The two words *(bios)* are spelled the same, but pronounced differently. They have the same appearance, but an altogether different meaning. Like many other mystics, he also compares the wakefulness of this world to death:

> Whatever we see when awake is death,
> when asleep, dreams.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 16, HPW p.20*

See also: **death** (▸2).

desert, desert of this world A desert is a place in which there is little or no vegetation, especially due to the lack of water. It is also a place where life is either absent or requires particular adaptation and is hidden from casual view. Spiritually speaking, the physical universe has often been described as a desert, since the Living Water of the inner Spirit is not immediately apparent. Everything is actually supported and maintained by this Spirit – yet it cannot be perceived by the physical senses, nor are the majority of people in contact with it within themselves.

Mystics have therefore described this world as a desert or a wilderness, a place of spiritual aridity where souls experience difficulty and are scorched by the fierce heat of their desires and passions. The expression is used this way in a well-known passage from *Isaiah,* quoted by the unknown gospel writer at the beginning of Matthew:

> A Voice cries, "Prepare in the wilderness a way for *Yahweh.*
> Make a straight highway for our God across the desert."
>
> *Isaiah 40:3, JB; cf. Matthew 3:3*

Although quoted in Matthew as a prophecy of the Messiah, there is also a mystical interpretation. The "Voice" that cries in the desert is the Word. It is heard in the "wilderness" or "desert" of this world, providing a "straight highway" or path back to God.

The metaphor is used throughout the Bible, particularly in relating the traditional history of Israel – their slavery and escape from Egypt, their crossing of the desert or wilderness of Sinai, and so on. The first-century Jewish commentator, Philo Judaeus, describes this desert as "the wilderness of passions and wickednesses".[1]

The Israelites, who symbolize humanity in the *Exodus* story, are a fractious people, and Moses has great difficulty keeping them under control. They are always finding something to complain about. Rather than being grateful for the abundance of God's grace and mercy, for giving them their daily spiritual Bread from heaven *(manna),* they are ungrateful to their heavenly Provider. At one point in the saga, the Israelites are joined by an even more intransigent people who lead them yet further down the path of ingratitude:

> The rabble who had joined the people were overcome by greed, and the sons of Israel themselves began to wail again, "Who will give us meat to eat?", they said. "Think of the fish we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic! Here we are wasting away, stripped of everything; there is nothing but *manna* for us to look at!"
>
> *Numbers 11:4–6, JB*

Understood allegorically, the spiritual food of the Word of God, the Bread from heaven, is spread before the soul at all times, but man is more interested in "onions and garlic" – the activities and pleasures of material life. By disobedience and ingratitude, man constantly turns away from the abundance of the Lord's grace and His spiritual food. As the biblical psalmist writes:

> Their desires overcame them in the desert,
> they challenged God in the wilds.
>
> *Psalm 106:14, JB*

The children of Israel became famous from the story as arch complainers, and many mystics have used it as an example of human ingratitude for divine providence. The Sufi mystic, Rūmī, is referring to this passage when he writes:

> A table of food was coming down from heaven
> without headache and without selling and buying,
> when some of the people of Moses cried disrespectfully,

"Where is garlic and lentils?"
Straightway the heavenly bread and dishes were cut off:
There remained for all of them, the toil of sowing
and labouring with mattock and scythe.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:80–82, MJR2 p.8

He means that it is human ingratitude for the ever present divine grace which results in the sense of labouring hard in order to gain a living in this world. Likewise, one of the biblical psalmists also writes of the Israelites:

They only sinned against Him more than ever,
defying the Most High in the desert,
deliberately challenging God
by demanding their favourite food.

They blasphemed against God,
"Is it likely," they said, "that God
could give a banquet in the wilderness?" …

How often they defied Him in the wilderness,
how often they outraged Him in the desert,
repeatedly challenging God, …
entirely oblivious of His hand
and of the time He saved them
from the Oppressor (the devil).

Psalm 78:17–19, 40–42, JB

Their scepticism mirrors the sceptics of this world who ridicule those who talk of receiving the spiritual banquet while still living in the desert of physical existence, or who try to explain away or ignore the existence and relevance of mystical experience.

The biblical psalmists commonly allude to various aspects of this story. In psalm sixty-eight, the "lonely" are those who have been projected by their individual egos into the separated existence of physical incarnation, but remain aware that something is missing, and seek a "permanent home" with God. They are the "prisoners" who are set free, while the "rebels" against God are those whose attention is constantly turned towards the world, and continue to live in this "arid land":

God gives the lonely a permanent home,
makes prisoners happy by setting them free,
but rebels must live in an arid land.

God, when You set out at the head of Your people,
  and marched across the desert, the earth rocked,
  the heavens deluged at God's coming,
  at the coming of God, the God of Israel.

God, You rained a downpour of blessings:
  when Your heritage was faint You gave it strength;
Your family found a home, where You
  in Your goodness, God, provided for the needy....

With thousands of myriads of divine chariots,
  the Lord has left Sinai for His sanctuary.
God, You have ascended to the height, and captured prisoners,
  You have taken men as tribute,
  yes, taken rebels to Your dwelling, *Yahweh!*

Psalm 68:6–10, 17–18, JB

God, in the form of a Master, guides his "people" through the "desert" of this world. Metaphorically, he marches before them, showering his grace and blessings upon the divine "heritage" locked up within man. Departing from the traditional story, the psalmist speaks of each human being travelling in a divine chariot, like the later Jewish *Merkavah* mystics, and just as Mānī, the third-century Iranian mystic, was later to describe souls as ascending in ships of light with the Saviour as the Helmsman. "Thousands of myriads" of them have left the "Sinai" desert of this world for the eternal realm, "His sanctuary". The Lord takes human souls as "prisoners". Rebellious and intransigent man is taken from the "desert" of this world, and transported to the eternity of God.

It is not only in the context of the *Exodus* story that the desert is found as a metaphor for this world. In another of the biblical psalms, the writer, in ebullient mood, implores God to free him from bondage to this world and from the passions that beset him, which cause him to squander his days without spiritual profit. He is, he says, like a "pelican" – a water bird – living in the "desert" of this world:

I live in a desert like the pelican,
  in a ruin like the screech owl;
I stay awake,
  lamenting like a lone bird on the roof.

Psalm 102:6–7, JB

The "ruin" is the body. The devotee stays awake at night "on the roof" of

the body – at the eye centre – continuously repeating the same refrain like a "screech owl", yearning for the meeting with the Beloved within.

The writer of the *Song of Songs* is also referring to the material world as "the desert", when he describes the lover (the soul) being brought out of the burning desert of this world through the support of her divine Beloved:

> Who is this coming up from the desert,
> leaning on her Beloved?
>
> *Song of Songs 8:5, JB*

In the Manichaean writings, where metaphor is often used explicitly, no doubt is left as to the meaning of the "desert". Alluding to Jesus' parable of the lost sheep,[2] the Master is described as:

> The Shepherd of the sheep
> that wanders in the desert of this world.
>
> *Psalms of Heracleidēs, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.193*

And the soul is exhorted:

> O soul, from where have you come?
> You are from on high.
> You are a stranger to the world,
> a sojourner on earth....
> You are the sheep that wandered in the desert....
> Your Father seeks you,
> your Shepherd searches for you.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.181*

And the devotee describes the devil as

> the ravenous Wolf, the son of the desert.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXXIII, MPB p.93*

Jesus, too, is understood as the one who brings spiritual nourishment to the soul in this world:

> Jesus, my light ... do not forsake me
> in the desert of this world....
> I have endured hunger and thirst (here)
> because of your unfailing plenty.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXIX; cf. MPB pp.87–88*

In one of the Manichaean hymns in Parthian, the devotee begs for release from the agonies of birth and death, describing this world as "waterless through drought":

> It is waterless through drought,
> and hardened by hot winds;
> No golden drop of water is ever found therein.
> Who will save me from this, and from all stabs,
> and take me afar from all distress of hell?
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān V:5–6, MHCP pp.86–87*

And later, speaking of the souls in this world, it is described as "hell" and a "desert place":

> They hunger always inside, within that hell ...
> that devouring deep, where hope (is feeble).
> It is a desert place, where water is not found,
> by whose agony all who enter there are pierced.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān Va:12; cf. MHCP pp.90–91*

See also: **dasht-i 'Adam** (2.1), **Egypt**, **ṣaḥrā-yi Nīstī** (2.1), **ṣaḥrā-yi qudsī** (2.1), **valley**.

1. Philo Judaeus, *Allegorical Interpretation* III:59, *PCW1* pp.414–15.
2. *Matthew* 18:11–14.

dhanb (A/P) (pl. *dhunūb*) *Lit.* a fault, a shortcoming, a limitation, an inadvertence. In Islamic thought, sins are considered to be of two kinds: *dhanb* – a fault or inadvertence, and *ithm* – a wilful and intentional transgression, the latter being the more serious offence. *Ithm* implies *dhanb,* though not *vice versa,* the distinction being in the degree of intention or wilfulness. There is a third term, *khaṭī'ah,* which is a more general term used for either category of sin. Islam also believes in the sinlessness *(ithmah)* of the prophets, as well as *Allāh*'s capacity and willingness to forgive the sins of ordinary people:

> O my slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt!
> Despair not of the mercy of *Allāh,*
> who forgiveth all sins *(al-dhunūb).*
> Lo! He is the Forgiving *(al-Ghafūr),* the Merciful *(al-Raḥīm).*
>
> *Qur'ān 39:53, MGK*

It is said that the remedy for *dhanb* is to remove it, and for the more serious *ithm* is to seek God's forgiveness. A *ḥadīth* (traditional saying) speaks in the name of God:

> So long as you call upon me and hope in me,
> I will forgive you all that originates from you:
> And I will not heed, O son of man,
> should your sins *(ithm)* reach the horizon of the heavens,
> and then you asked my pardon, and I would pardon you.
>
> *Ḥadīth (al-Nawawī) 42, FTN p.177*

In Islam, as in most religions, sin is a subject of considerable theological discussion.

See also: **ithm**, **ithmah** (▸2), **khaṭa'**, **sin (in early Christianity)**, **sin (in Judaism)**.

disease(s) Metaphorically, the affliction of souls in this world, especially those in human form, consisting of the innumerable sins or the *karma* of the past, together with the present human imperfections and attractions for the world of the senses. All these help to keep the soul revolving in the realm of birth and death. They constitute the sickness or disease of the soul, which is thus in need of healing.

Stories concerning the miracle healings of past mystics and holy men are prevalent in the folklore and legends of all religions. Many of these, however, are probably misunderstandings and literalizations of the spiritual help given by mystics to souls sick with the disease of worldliness. It is likely that many of the miracles attributed to Jesus, for instance, have arisen from an externalization of mystical metaphors associated with sickness and healing, originally meant in a spiritual sense. This is clear in the *Acts of Thomas,* when Judas Thomas describes Jesus as:

> Healer of sick souls,
> life giver of the universe,
> and Saviour of his creatures.
>
> *Acts of Thomas I, AAA pp.153–54*

He is also the one

> Who has rid me of this disease
> that is hard to be healed and cured,

and was abiding in me forever,
and has implanted sober health in me.
Acts of Thomas 15; cf. AAA pp.157–58, ANT p.370

A disease that is "abiding ... forever" and is "hard to be healed" is that of taking birth in this world. Hence, in the Manichaean hymns in Parthian, the Saviour pledges to free the soul who is begging for release from birth and death:

I shall set you free from every sickness,
and from every distress at which you have wept.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:49; cf. MHCP pp.146–47

In the Manichaean psalms in Coptic, the devotee speaks from personal experience of this release:

In a moment, my God, Your mercy became one with me.
Because of Your strong protection,
lo, my diseases passed far from me.
Lo, joy has overtaken me
through Your Right Hand that came to me.
Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.153

In the *Acts of John,* speaking specifically of sexual desire, the apostle John, who is commonly portrayed as a lifelong celibate, thanks Jesus for – among many other things – keeping him free from marriage and sexual desire. Jesus is he:

Who rid me of the foul madness
that is in the flesh;
Who took from me from the bitter death,
and established me on you alone;
Who muzzled the secret disease of my soul
and prevented the open deed.
Acts of John 113; cf. ANT p.269

See also: **Medicine of Life, miracles** (▸2), **Physician** (▸2), **reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism)** (6.3).

dream A mentally imagined sequence of events experienced during certain phases of sleep; thus, metaphorically, imagination; mystically, life in this world. Many mystics have observed that the physical universe has no absolute

reality, that it has no more reality than a dream. They also say that it is possible to awaken from this 'waking dream' to a higher state of consciousness. Rūmī says that the wakefulness of this world is only another kind of dream:

> Know, O comrade, that your sleep and waking
> is as though a sleeper should dream
> that he has gone to sleep.
> He thinks, "Now I am asleep,"
> unaware that he is really in the second sleep.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1736–37, MJR4 p.97*

From a similar period of history, though at that time in an unknown part of the world, roughly a hundred years before Cortés landed in Mexico (1523) and eighty years before Columbus discovered the New World (1492), Tochihuitzín Coyolchiuhqui, a mystic king of the Nahua, a people who once lived in what is now Mexico, expressed the idea poetically:

> We have come only to sleep,
> we have come only to dream.
> It is not true, it is not true,
> we have come to live on earth.
>
> As at every spring the grass is renewed,
> so do we too acquire form.
> Our heart puts out shoots, grows green:
> our body begets a few flowers –
> And then lies withered.
>
> *Tochihuitzín Coyolchiuhqui, in FIN p.18*

A little later in history, in North India, Guru Nānak similarly writes:

> This world is like a drama staged in a dream *(supnā):*
> in a moment this play ends.
> Some attain … union and others depart in separation:
> whatever pleases Him, that comes to pass.
> Nothing else can be done.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 18, MMS*

Likewise, one of his successors likens waking man to one who sleeps:

> This world is a dream *(supnā),* but one in sleep knows it not:
> in an unconscious state, he is clung to it.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 740, MMS*

Several centuries later, the Indian mystic, Bābā Jaimal Singh (1839–1903), wrote to his disciple and successor-to-be, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh:

> This body is like dream stuff. The body is unreal and everything of this world is unreal. *Nām Dhun* (the Melody of the Name) alone is real. Hold fast to that.
>
> *Bābā Jaimal Singh, Spiritual Letters 56, SLO p.70*

And:

> Always look upon the world as if it is a dream, and believe it firmly. Our relatives also are part of the dream world and are therefore unreal. Work in the world with this consciousness in your heart.
>
> *Bābā Jaimal Singh, Spiritual Letters 93, SLO p.96*

Shakespeare, too, said the same through one of his characters:

> We are such stuff as dreams are made on;
> And our little life is (sur)rounded with a sleep.
>
> *Shakespeare (Prospero), The Tempest 4:1*

See also: **illusion (in Taoism)**, **jāgnā**, **khvāb**, **sleep**.

drought See **desert**, **Living Water** (3.1), **Water of Life** (3.1), **Waters** (3.1).

drujō demāna (Av) *Lit.* house, abode or domain *(demāna)* of untruth *(druj)*; the physical universe; the place to which souls are led by the evil or material tendencies of their own minds; a place of darkness and murkiness; an expression used by the mystic, Zarathushtra, in his *Gāthās*.

Scholars and followers of the Zoroastrian religion have usually assumed that *drujō demāna* refers to hell, but mystics have always referred to the physical world as the realm of darkness and illusion or untruth. Speaking of those who have been deceived by life in this world, Zarathushtra writes:

> Then, for all time, will they be dwellers
> in the abode of untruth *(drujō demāna)*.
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 46:11; cf. DSZ p.609*

See also: **asat desh**, **Druj** (6.1).

drunkenness Metaphorically, the condition of worldliness. Mystics have described the people of this world as drunk with the affairs of life and with the panorama presented to the senses. Human beings are depicted as intoxicated and befuddled to the extent that they cannot think or act straight, and as being under the influence of something other than their better intentions. As a result, they forget the spiritual purpose of existence. In the *Gospel of Thomas*, there is a saying attributed to Jesus where he says just this:

> I stood in the midst of the world
> and in the flesh was I seen of them:
> And I found all men drunken,
> and none found I athirst (for God) among them.
> And my soul grieves over the sons of men,
> because they are blind in their heart, and see not.
> For empty they came into the world,
> and empty too they seek to leave the world.
> But for the moment they are intoxicated.
> When they shake off their wine,
> then they will repent.
>
> *Gospel of Thomas 38:28; cf. NHS20 pp.64–65, OLAG p.50*

The term is used similarly in one of the Manichaean psalms, where the writer is contrasting the domain of Satan with that of the "God of Truth":

> Come; my Lord Jesus, the Saviour of souls,
> who has saved me from the drunkenness
> and Error of the world.
> You are the Paraclete whom I have loved since my youth:
> your light shines forth in me like the lamp of light;
> You have driven away from me the oblivion of Error:
> you have taught me to bless God and His lights....
>
> The god of this *aeon* (the devil)
> has shut the heart of the unbelieving,
> and has sunk them in his Error and the deceit of drunkenness.
> He has made them blaspheme against the God of Truth, ...
> His Power and His Wisdom.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVIII; cf. MPB pp.56–57*

The writer says that he has been saved from the drunkenness and Error of the devil and that now the divine light shines forth within him. In another psalm, the immediate source of this drunkenness is identified as the interminable cares, needs and passions of the body:

The care of my poor body
  has made me drunk in its drunkenness.
Its demolitions and its buildings
  have taken my mind from me.
Its plantings and its uprootings,
  they stir up trouble for me.
Its fire, its lust,
  they trick me daily.
Its begetting and its destroying
  bind me to a debt (of sin).
Many are the labours that I suffered,
  while I was in this dark house.

Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.152

The term is also used to mean the ecstatic intoxication of divine love.

See also: **blindness**, **deafness**, **intoxication**, **madness**, **wine** (▸2).

duḥkha (S), **dukh** (H/Pu), **dukkha** (Pa) *Lit.* uneasiness, pain, suffering, sorrow, distress, difficulty, hardship, affliction; said by Sanskrit grammarians to be derived from *dus* (bad, difficult) + axle hole *(kha),* thus 'running badly', 'badly moving', 'badly fitting'; more probably derived from *dus* (bad, difficult) + *stha* (standing), thus 'standing badly'; a term often contrasted with its opposite *sukha,* meaning happiness or pleasure.

Mystics observe that life in this world is a combination of *sukha* and *duḥkha,* of happiness and suffering, neither of them bringing any inner and permanent bliss. In a place where all experiences, whether pleasing or painful, are associated with change, conflict and the creation of karmic bonds, there can be neither permanent happiness nor permanent unhappiness. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* observes:

> From the *annamaya-kosha* (*lit.* the covering made of food, the physical body) of the father, and in accordance with its past *karma,* the human soul is reincarnated; therefore, the wise consider this beautiful body to be a punishment for the suffering *(duḥkha)* of the effects of past *karma.*
>
> This temple of suffering and enjoyment *(bhoga-mandira),* made up of flesh, bones, nerves, marrow, blood, and intersected with blood vessels and so on, is only for suffering pain *(duḥkha).*
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 1:89–90; cf. SSV p.14*

In Buddhism, suffering *(dukkha)* is one of the 'four noble truths' taught by the Buddha. These are: firstly, the omnipresence of misery and suffering *(dukkha)* in the world; secondly, that suffering stems from the laws of *karma* and reincarnation; thirdly, that suffering can be annihilated in a state known as *nirvāṇa;* fourthly, that there is a path leading to *nirvāṇa.*

According to Buddhist thought, the world has three primary characteristics. The first two, *anichcha* (impermanence) and *anattā* (the lack of a permanent sense of self), lead inescapably to the third: *dukkha* (suffering). In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha observes that in such a world, it is wisdom *(paññā)* that brings an end to suffering:

> All created things are transitory *(anichcha).*
> When, by wisdom *(paññā),* a person realizes this,
> then he is not troubled by suffering *(dukkha).*
> This is the path to purity.
>
> All created things are full of suffering *(dukkha).*
> When, by wisdom *(paññā),* a person realizes this,
> then he is not troubled by suffering *(dukkha).*
> This is the path to purity.
>
> All aspects of phenomenal things are without soul *(anattā).*
> When, by wisdom *(paññā),* a person realizes this,
> then he is not troubled by suffering *(dukkha).*
> This is the path to purity.
>
> *Dhammapada 20:5–7*

Like many mystics, the Buddha observed that all happiness and suffering stem from the mind:

> The mind is the forerunner of all states.
> The mind comes first, they are mind-made.
> If a man speaks or acts with an evil mind,
> suffering *(dukkha)* follows him,
> as the cartwheel follows the hoof of the ox.
>
> The mind is the forerunner of all states.
> The mind comes first, they are mind-made.
> If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind,
> happiness *(sukha)* follows him,
> as a shadow follows his heel.
>
> *Dhammapada 1:1–2*

Elaborating, he explains that the source of suffering is the desires and cravings *(taṇhā)* of the mind:

> As a tree, though cut down,
>   will grow again if its root is anchored and uninjured:
> Even so will suffering *(dukkha)* return repeatedly,
>   if the roots of craving *(taṇhā)* are not destroyed....
>
> Driven by craving *(taṇhā),*
>   men are fearful, like hunted hares.
> Held fast by fetters,
>   they experience suffering *(dukkha),*
>   continuously and repeatedly.
>
> *Dhammapada 24:5, 9*

The end of suffering, he says, comes with the destruction of "craving":

> He who destroys craving *(taṇhā)*
>   overcomes all suffering *(dukkha).*
>
> *Dhammapada 24:21*

Hindu sacred texts point out that pleasure *(sukha)* gives rise to attachment *(rāga),* while pain and unhappiness *(duḥkha)* induce feelings of dislike and hatred *(dvesha).* Both create karmic bonds and entanglements to the world, drawing the soul back into various bodies in the labyrinth of birth and death. Consequently, both – either actively or potentially – are a source of suffering.

In the *Bhagavad Gītā,* it is said that a wise and discriminating person views all experiences of the world as sources of *duḥkha* or suffering:

> The contact of the senses with their objects
>   produces heat and cold,
>   pleasure *(sukha)* and pain *(duḥkha).*
> Being impermanent, they come and go.
> Bear them with patience, O Bhārata!
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:14; cf. BGT*

> Whatever enjoyments are born of contact with the senses,
>   they are sources of suffering *(duḥkha)* only,
>   for they have a beginning and an end.
> A wise man takes no delight in them.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 5:22; cf. BGT*

Patañjali says much the same in his *Yoga Sūtras:*

> To the wise, all misery *(duḥkha)* is understood to arise
> from change, anxiety and mental impressions *(sanskāras)*,
> together with the interplay between
> the *guṇas* (attributes) and the disturbances *(vṛittis)* (of the mind).
>
> *Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 2:15*

According to the *Sānkhya* school of Indian philosophy there are three kinds of suffering *(duḥkha)*, each arising from the bondage of the soul to the body. Suffering is brought to an end by realization of the illusory nature of this bondage by correct discrimination of the true self or soul *(purusha)* from what is not the self *(prakṛiti)*. Thus, the *Sānkhya Sūtras* begin, "The supreme goal of life is to put an end completely to the three kinds of suffering."[1] The same terms are also used in *Āyurveda*, the traditional system of Indian medicine. The three kinds of *duḥkha* are:

1. *Ādhibhautika. Lit.* pertaining to *(ādhi)* nature *(bhautika*, from *bhūta*, something created); suffering arising from the outer influences of nature, such as other human beings, other creatures such as birds, animals, reptiles, evil spirits and so on, and inanimate things.
2. *Ādhyātmika. Lit.* pertaining to *(ādhi)* the self *(ātmika)*; misery or suffering arising from within one's own self – whether from body or mind. Suffering incurred through the body includes physical pain, disease, cold, discomfort and so forth. Suffering arising in the mind includes that experienced through human imperfections such as anger, jealousy, desire, hatred, greed, attachment and so on.
3. *Ādhidaivika. Lit.* pertaining to *(ādhi)* the gods *(daivika*, from *deva)*; suffering arising from supernatural causes, such as the influence of the planets, spirits, gods, or supernatural beings. Earthquakes, storms and other natural phenomena are also included in this category.

Saints advise not only learning to tolerate the interplay of pain and pleasure, but also rising altogether above the realm where they are active. Hence, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes:

> O my mind, leave this place of pleasure *(sukh)* and pain *(dukh)*:
> Rise above it by holding onto the true Name.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:9.1, SBP p.119*

In order to encourage people to turn away from the world, Saints not only extol the virtues of the spiritual way of life, they also describe in forceful detail the suffering experienced by the souls in this world. Mahārāj Charan Singh writes:

Wherever you turn in this world, you will find pain and suffering. Just turn on a radio at any time of the day, and you are likely to hear news of one religion fighting against another or of one country attacking another. Castes, creeds and colours have their own arenas of discord and dissension. The result is fighting and wars which leave millions of men, women and children dead, widowed or orphaned. Such is the world that lies before our eyes. We are kept on the run all the time to earn our livelihood. In constant fear of death, we do not even know when or how it may come.

Mahārāj Charan Singh, Divine Light, DL p.7

Aware of this universal suffering, Guru Nānak observes:

Nānak, the whole world is in distress *(dukh).*

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 954, MMS

Tulsīdās says much the same:

Wandering about day and night,
throughout the six seasons,
the body endures untold suffering *(dukh).*
The sinful one, whose face is turned away from God,
can never attain happiness.

Tulsīdās, Bārahmāsī, Pūsh 3–4, TDB p.4

Likewise, Sahajobāī writes:

While dying – pain *(dukh),*
while living – misery *(dukh):*
The diet is pure suffering *(dukh)!*

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Sādh Lakshaṇ 37, SBB p.15

So clouded is human vision that man seeks happiness in the very things that bring him pain. Forever in search of happiness in the wrong place, he wastes his life:

All the things in which you are deeply entangled
are nothing but a load of suffering *(dukh).*
Your entire life is wasted in tears,
with a noose of attachment (around your neck).

Malūkdās, Bānī, Chetāvnī 1:2, MDB p.10

And Kabīr observes:

Man prays for peace *(sukh)*, but pain *(dukh)* befalls him:
I like not to ask for that (kind of) peace *(sukh)*.
Kabīr, Ādi Granth 330, MMS

In another poem, Kabīr points out that whether king or subject, rich and poor, everyone is unhappy and discontented except the Saints:

Of all who live in this house of clay,
not one is happy; all live in suffering *(dukh)*.
Unhappy is the *yogī*, unhappy the mendicant
who wanders from place to place,
and doubly unhappy the ascetic.
No place is empty of desires
and the hope of their fulfilment;
The wheel of fortune turns,
and up and down they go,
the householder and the anchorite alike.
Fearing this pain, Shukdev, the great sage,
did from the womb relinquish all desires
and turned his back on illusion *(māyā)*.
When I speak the truth, no one believes,
and lies I cannot tell.
Even the gods are unhappy –
Brahmā, Shiva and *Vishṇu*, who set
the pageant of the creation in motion;
Unhappy the hermit, unhappy the king,
unhappy beyond words, the pauper.
Says Kabīr, the whole world is unhappy;
The Saints alone, having subdued their mind,
are truly happy.
Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Chetāvnī aur Upadesh 38, KSS1 p.34

Similarly, Sahajobāī writes:

The rich are unhappy *(dukh)*,
the poor are the very picture of misery *(dukh)*;
The Saint alone, O Sahajo, enjoys true happiness:
for he has realized the wonderful secret.
Sahajobāī, Bānī, Sādh Lakshaṇ 39, SBB p.15

See also: **sukha**.

1. *Sānkhya Sūtras* 1.

dumbness Lacking the power of speech; metaphorically, the dullness of a soul lost in this world with no understanding of how to truly praise or worship God in a mystic or spiritual sense; part of a family of metaphors used in mystic writings centred on sickness and healing. In the Mandaean writings, for instance, the Creative Word is portrayed as the Tree of Life. Among its many qualities:

> It establishes speech in the mouths of the stammering,
> and the deaf and the dumb.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 375, CPM p.270*

See also: **blindness**, **deafness**, **drunkenness**.

dunyā, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the world; hence, this present life, this world; life in the material world; often contrasted with *al-ākhirah* (the hereafter), hence the expression *dunyā wa-ākhirah* (this world and the next). In the *Qur'ān*, *dunyā* is the present life:

> The life of this world *(al-dunyā)*
> is naught but a sport and a diversion.
> Surely the home in the hereafter *(dār al-ākhirah)*,
> is better for those who are righteous.
> What! Do you not understand?
>
> *Qur'ān 6:32*

What is to be sought is a place in "the world to come":

> O believers, what is the matter with you,
> that when you are asked,
> "Go forth in the way of God,"
> you cling heavily to the earth?
> Do you prefer the present life *(al-ḥayāt)*
> to the world to come *(al-ākhirah)?*
> Yet the enjoyment of this life *(al-dunyā)* is little
> as compared with the world to come *(al-ākhirah)*.
>
> *Qur'ān 9:38*

In Sufi usage, *dunyā* is worldliness, rather than material life, *per se*. 'Abd al-Allāh Rāzī said, "*Dunyā* is that which veils you from God." Possibly, he had in mind the *ḥadīth:* "Your world *(dunyā)* is everything that distracts you from your Lord."[1] Thus, Rūmī points out that it is not the things of the world in themselves that comprise the veil; it is attachment to them that makes a person "forgetful of God":

Plans for gaining the things of this world *(dunyā)* are worthless:
Plans for renouncing this world *(dunyā)* are inspired (by God).
The right plan is that the prisoner
digs an escape hole out of his prison;
If he blocks up the hole, that is a foolish plan.
This world *(dunyā)* is the prison, and we are the prisoners:
dig a hole in the prison, and let yourself out!
What is the world *(dunyā)?* – To be forgetful of God.
It is not merchandise and silver,
and weighing scales and women.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:980–83; cf. MJR2 p.55

See also: **al-ākhirah** (4.1), **dunyā wa-ākhirah** (4.1).

1. *Ḥadīth*, in *MJR7* p.81.

Egypt (He. *Miẓrayim*) An ancient country in North Eastern Africa, with its northernmost border on the Mediterranean coast. The ancient Egyptian civilization, dating back to the fourth millennium BCE, was noted among other things for its occult and mystic wisdom. Old traditions linger on, and even in early Christian times, many of those groups which retained the mystical elements of Jesus' teachings were in Egypt, the capital at that time being Alexandria.

Because Egypt was the country in which the children of Israel had been held captive, it became a symbol in the Middle East for the exile and captivity of the soul in the physical universe. The Hebrew name for Egypt is *Miẓrayim*. Of uncertain derivation, the word has been derived in a number of fanciful ways. Taking the derivation from the Hebrew word *ẓar* (narrow, constricted), some Jewish commentators have interpreted Egypt, and the Israelites' enslavement there, to signify the souls' sojourn in the lower levels of material existence, which constrict its growth and enslave it to the senses and mind.

Other rabbis have derived *Miẓrayim* from a similar Hebrew root meaning 'oppressed', because it was in Egypt that the children of Israel were oppressed:

Rabbi Jose ben Rabbi Halafta said: "All the kingdoms designated by the name of *Miẓrayim* (Egypt) are so called because they persecute *(meẓirot)* Israel."

Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 16:4, JCL

The story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt is told in *Exodus*. Philo Judaeus, the first-century Jew and Greek-speaking philosopher of Alexandria, is well

known for his allegorical interpretation of the Bible. Understanding the *Exodus* story as the spiritual journey of the soul, he speaks of "Egypt, the body",[1] "Egypt, the country of the body",[2] "the body, of which the land of Egypt is a symbol",[3] and in many other places he indicates and illustrates his conviction that the story of the escape from Egypt is to be understood allegorically. In one passage, he describes the Israelites' escape from Egypt as the spiritual movement away from "bodily passions":

> When he led us forth out of Egypt, that is out of our bodily passions, as we journeyed along the track barren of pleasure, we encamped in Marah, a spot having no water fit to drink, but water wholly bitter;[4] for the delights that come by the way of eyes and ears and that of the appetite and sexual lusts bewitched us with their haunting music, ever ringing in our ears. And whenever we wished wholly to sever ourselves from them, they would pull against us, drawing us on and gripping us, and persistently casting their spells over us, so that, giving in to their unceasing efforts to subdue and tame us, we came to abhor labour as utterly bitter and repugnant, and we planned to retrace our course and return to Egypt, the refuge of a dissolute and licentious life. And we might have done so had not the Saviour, anticipating us, taken pity on us and cast into our soul a sweetening tree like a syrup, producing love of labour instead of hatred of labour.[5] For, being the Creator, He knew that it is impossible for us to rise superior to anything whatever, unless a vehement love of such effort be implanted in us. No pursuit that men engage in, where affection does not draw them, gains its fitting end. For complete success a sense of liking must be added, and the heart must be absorbed in the object of its desire.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile 45, PCW2 pp.418–21*

There are other places in the Bible where Egypt probably refers allegorically to the physical universe. In *Genesis,* for instance, the story is told of Abram (who at this point has not yet been renamed Abraham):

> And Abram went up out of Egypt …
> And he went on his journeys …
> Even to Bet-El,
>   unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning,
>   between Bet-El and Ḥai;
> Unto the place of the altar,
>   which he had made there at the first:
> And there Abram called on the Name of the Lord.
>
> *Genesis 13:1, 3–4, KJV*

Taken allegorically, it means that Abram sets out upon the mystic journey. He travels out of the body, away from the physical universe and comes "to the place where his tent had been at the beginning". "His tent" means his home, in which nomadic people of the Middle East used to live. It refers to his origin, his source. Abram returns from the physical universe to his original home, "where his tent had been at the beginning", before he had separated from God. Here, too, Abram finds the "altar", the innermost holy of holies, the mystic Source, where he can worship the true Name of the Lord – the Word or *Logos*.

The name of the location of Abram's home in this story is also significant. It lies "between Bet-El and Ḥai". Bet-El was a well-known town in ancient Palestine. In the Hebrew text of *Genesis, Bet* means house, home or land, while *El* is an epithet of God, often interpreted to mean the 'One on High'. So Abram's home "at the beginning" is called 'the house of God'. The passage, then, is replete with mystic metaphors.

A similar interpretation of this passage is given in the *Zohar:*

> For even in Egypt, a country of magicians from whom no man could escape, Abram distinguished himself, and he raised himself there to a higher eminence, as it is written, "And Abram went up out of Egypt." To where did he ascend? "Into the south."[6]
>
> Said Rabbi Simeon: "Observe that these words have an inner meaning, and indicate to us that Abram went down to the 'lower degrees' in Egypt, and probed them to the bottom, but clave not to them and returned unto his Master....
>
> "Abram came up again and returned to his place, to the upper grade to which he had been attached previously. This whole incident is related in order to show that he was steadfast in his attachment to Wisdom, and was not seduced, and returned to his former condition....
>
> "The inner significance of this narrative is that if Abram had not gone down to Egypt and been tested there, his portion would not have been in the Lord. Similarly with his descendants, whom God desired to make a unique and perfect people and to bring near to Himself: if they had not first gone down to Egypt and been tested there, they would not have been God's chosen people."
>
> *Zohar 1:83a, ZSS1 p.276, JCL*

Among the early Christian writings, there are a number of places where Egypt is used as a symbol for the physical universe. In an undoubtedly mythological account of the death of Jesus' mother, the writer relates:

> Thereafter, Peter lifted up the head of the body,
> and began to sing, saying:
> "Israel is come out of Egypt."
>
> *Assumption of the Virgin XI:2; cf. ANT p.213*

The soul is equated with Israel, and the physical body is symbolized as Egypt. Likewise, in the allegorical *Expository Treatise on the Soul,* the writer uses Israel and Egypt in the same metaphorical manner. He is speaking of the necessity of the longing for release, before a soul can be brought out of captivity:

> Those who pray hypocritically deceive only themselves. Indeed, it is in order that He might know who is worthy of salvation that God examines the inward parts and searches the bottom of the heart. For no one is worthy of salvation who still loves the place of deception (this world)....
>
> Certainly Israel would not have been visited in the first place, to be brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, if it had not sighed to God and wept for the oppression of its labours.
>
> *Expository Treatise on the Soul 136–37; cf. NHS21 pp.164–69*

In the same text, the writer quotes the Jewish prophet Ezekiel. Here, the soul in this world is being portrayed as a prostitute in her love and attraction for the varieties of experience of material and sensory life. And the world is again symbolized as Egypt:

> Again he said in Ezekiel:
>
> > "It came to pass after much depravity," said the Lord, "you built yourself a brothel and you made yourself a beautiful place in the streets. And you built yourself brothels on every lane, and you wasted your beauty, and you spread your legs in every alley, and you multiplied your acts of prostitution. You prostituted yourself to the sons of Egypt, those who are your neighbours, men great of flesh."[7]
>
> But what does "the sons of Egypt, ... men great of flesh" mean if not the domain of the flesh and the perceptible realm and the affairs of the earth by which the soul has become defiled here, receiving bread from them, as well as wine, oil, clothing, and the other external nonsense surrounding the body – the things she thinks she needs.
>
> *Expository Treatise on the Soul 130, NHS21 pp.150–51*

The gnostic writer clearly interprets Egypt to mean the physical universe in the text he quotes from *Ezekiel.*

One of the best examples of the metaphorical use of Egypt is in the long allegorical poem, the *Robe of Glory,* found in the *Acts of Thomas.* There, the soul, symbolized as a child, is sent out by his Father (the Lord) and the Mother (the Holy Spirit) to collect the "one pearl" which is found in "Egypt". The pearl is the pearl of true spirituality which can only be found while the soul is in human form – in "Egypt". The poem is related in the first person by the child – the soul:

> And they (my parents) made a compact with me,
> and wrote it in my heart,
> so that it should not be forgotten:
> "If you go down into Egypt,
> and bring back thence the one pearl,
> which is in the midst of the sea,
> hard by the loud-breathing serpent,
> then you shall again put on your bright robe
> and your toga, which is laid over it.
> And with your Brother, our next in rank,
> you shall be heir in our kingdom."
>
> *Robe of Glory 11–15, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.239, ANT pp.411–12, HS pp.12–13*

Every part of this carefully crafted poem has an allegorical meaning. The "serpent" is the devil, the mind; "loud-breathing" because it is always active. The "robe" is the garment of light worn by the pure soul. The "Brother" is the Master, the one who ultimately brings the soul up out of Egypt, and the kingdom is naturally the eternal home of the soul.

The soul therefore makes its descent into this world, into "Egypt", passing through the higher regions of creation on its way, symbolized in the poem as geographical places:

> I passed the borders of Maishān,
> the meeting place of the merchants of the East,
> And I reached the land of Babel,
> and I entered the walls of Sarbug.
> I went down into Egypt.
>
> *Robe of Glory 18–20, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA pp.239–40, ANT p.412, HS pp.14–15*

Again, "Egypt" is clearly located at the bottom of the hierarchy of creation – the physical universe. The story continues with the royal prince becoming increasingly involved in the play of physical life, forgetting all about his quest for the pearl of spirituality.

The parents of the child, however, do not forget their original promise to the soul and, according to the allegory, a plan is devised by which the child

may be brought home. A special speaking "letter" is sent in the hands of the "Brother", the Master. The letter is the Word, the Voice of God, the divine Music, the Call sent out by the Father to bring his errant children home. In the symbolism of the poem, the "letter" says:

> From your Father, the King of kings,
> and your Mother, the Mistress of the East,
> and from your Brother, our next in rank,
> to you our son, who is in Egypt, greeting!
> Up and arise from your sleep,
> and listen to the words of our letter!
> Call to mind that you are a son of kings!
> See the slavery – and whom you serve!
> Remember the pearl
> for which you were sent to Egypt!
>
> *Robe of Glory 41–45, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.241, ANT p.413, HS pp.18–19*

So the soul is encouraged to wake up and begin the homeward journey:

> I remembered that I was a son of kings,
> and my free soul longed for its natural state.
> I remembered the pearl,
> for which I had been sent to Egypt.
>
> *Robe of Glory 56–57, Acts of Thomas IX; cf. AAA p.242, ANT p.413, HS pp.20–21*

And by charming the serpent to sleep, by listening to the "letter" and by following the "Brother", the soul is eventually enabled to return to its spiritual home.

The poem is a stirring one, telling the ancient and heart-warming tale of the traveller's return home. It also exemplifies the extensive use made of metaphor by the ancient writers of the Middle East, and in particular the meaning of Egypt, as a term in a mystic context.

See also: **exile, Pharaoh** (5.1), **sons of Israel** (▸2).

1. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 3, *PCW4* pp.140–41.
2. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 28, *PCW4* pp.220–21.
3. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 14, *PCW4* pp.174–75.
4. *Exodus* 15:23.
5. *cf. Exodus* 15:25.
6. *Genesis* 13:1.
7. *Ezekiel* 16:23–26 *(Septuagint).*

Error A mistake, an inaccuracy, illusion, deception; mystically and religiously, worldliness, the illusion of the world; also, mistaken beliefs and practices; also, beliefs and practices other than those held by the user of the term. A term commonly used in early Christian, Manichaean and gnostic literature, often allied to the workings of the devil or the realm of the devil. The physical universe constantly shifts and changes, having no permanent reality. It has therefore been called Error, since it presents itself as reality, but has no permanence. Souls are consequently deceived into taking the impermanent as permanent, the unreal as the real, and deception as truth.

Error is that which enshrouds the mind, preventing perception of the "heavenly light":

> For the thick darkness of Error, which is spread over your mind, permits you not to acquire the heavenly light, which is the understanding of knowledge.
>
> *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, DAA p.26*

Because of Error, man overlooks God:

> You, Lord, are He that in all things
> shows compassion and spares men.
> For men by reason of the Error that is in them
> have overlooked You;
> But You have not overlooked them.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 25; cf. ANT p.375*

In the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas prays to Jesus to be the "Guide" to souls in this world – the "land of Error", also depicted as the "land of sickness", the "land of the weary" and a "polluted land":

> Be unto them a Guide in the land of Error;
> Be unto them a Physician in the land of sickness;
> Be unto them a rest in the land of the weary;
> Sanctify them in a polluted land;
> Be their Physician both of bodies and souls;
> Make them holy shrines and temples of yourself,
> and let your Holy Spirit dwell in them.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 156; cf. AAA pp.288–89, ANT pp.432–33*

He also prays to the Lord who can "redeem" men "from Error":

O Lord who rules over every soul that is in the body;
Lord, Father of the souls that have their hope in You,
  and hope on Your mercies:
Who redeems from Error those men that are Your own,
  and sets free from bondage and corruption
  Your subjects who come to Your refuge.

Acts of Thomas 67; cf. ANT pp.395–96

The writer of the gnostic tractate, the *Gospel of Truth*, explains that "Error" has actually prepared "a creation" as a copy or "substitute for the Truth":

> When the Totality (creation) went about searching for the One from whom they had come forth … ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror. And the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see. For this reason, Error became powerful; it worked on its own matter foolishly, not having known the Truth. It set about with a creation, preparing with power and beauty the substitute for the Truth.

Gospel of Truth 17, NHS22 pp.82–83

See also: **bhrama**, **māyā**, **spiritual ignorance**.

exile A prolonged, generally enforced, absence from one's native country. In spiritual literature, the soul is commonly said to be an exile, held against its will in a foreign land, unable to return to its true home with God. In particular, the stories of the children of Israel, enslaved in Egypt and later exiled in Babylon, have been used in Judaic, Christian and other Middle Eastern mystical writings as symbols of the soul's exile from God, held captive by the devil, the negative power.

Completing this family of metaphors, Pharaoh was sometimes depicted in allegorical writing as the devil, while Egypt was used as a metaphor for the physical universe. In fact, there is good reason to believe that the story of the children of Israel as depicted in *Exodus* and other biblical writings was actually a mystical allegory, perhaps based upon some degree of historical fact, but retold as a parable of the soul.

One of the commonest images used by the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī, was souls as particles of light, separated or exiled from their divine Source, and in need of rescue by the divine Saviour. Hence, a Manichaean psalmist writes:

I am from the Light and from the gods,
  yet I have become an exile, separated from them.…

I am a god, born of the gods, brilliant, flashing, and bright,
shining, sweet scented and lovely;
But now I have fallen into misery.
Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.874, RMP aw; cf. ML pp.48–49

In another text, the majority of which is lost, a story is told of the exile of a prince on whose behalf his "living Mother" (Wisdom, the creative Power) intercedes with his "primordial Father" (God):

He was the son of the primordial Father
and a prince, a King's son.
He gave his soul to the enemies,
and his whole dominion into bondage.
He prayed to the living Mother,
and she entreated the Father of Greatness:
"The fair son who does no harm,
why has he been imprisoned among demons?"
Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.875ff., RMP bd; cf. GSR p.49:10.1, ML p.49, MM p.52

Practically the whole of the intervening text is lost, but towards the end, the gist of the story can be gleaned from a surviving fragment:

The Mother welcomed and kissed him, saying:
"You have come again, exiled son.
Hurry and go into the Light,
for those of your own kind are greatly longing for you."
Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.877ff., RMP bd; cf. GSR p.49:10.1, ML p.49, MM p.53

This is the message that all true Saviours convey to their disciples.

See also: **captives** (6.3), **Egypt**, **slaves** (6.3), **sons of Israel** (▸2).

Exodus A going out; biblically, the escape of the Israelites from Egypt, through the intervention of God, led by Moses; also, the second book of the Bible, which describes this and the subsequent divine revelation on Mount Sinai; from the Greek *exodos,* from *ex* (out) + *hodos* (way).

Though believing in its historical veracity, many Jewish commentators have also interpreted the Exodus story metaphorically, emphasizing the importance of struggling for spiritual freedom, of overcoming the lower spiritual state of enslavement of the soul to the body and to the material world – symbolized as Egypt – and moving to a higher spiritual level.

See also: **Egypt**, **exile**, **Pharaoh** (5.1).

farīb (P) *Lit.* deceit, deception, trickery; mystically, the creation. When a person's face is turned towards the creation and away from the divine Reality, all creation is a vast trickery.

See also: **bhrama**, **illusion**, **khayāl**.

farq al-awwal, al- (A), **farq-i avval** (P) *Lit.* the first *(awwal)* separation *(farq)*: the first division; the separation of the creation from God. Al-Qāshānī defines it as

> the veiling of Truth by creation, and the persistence of the forms of creation in their existing state.
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah 411, GST p.130*

faṭr (A/P) *Lit.* split, fissure, crack, cleavage, rift, rupture; division, separation; also, commencing, beginning, creating (particularly something new); splitting, cleaving; mystically, the creation; the primary separation between God and creation. *Faṭr* denotes the creation because it arises from a 'differentiation' or 'individuation' of the One. Hence, al-Qāshānī defines *faṭr* as:

> the differentiation of the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq)* from the creation by individuation *(ta'ayyun)* and its consequences.
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah 418, GST p.131*

fool, folly, foolishness A person or state characterized by stupidity and lack of sense or judgment; spiritually, a worldly person or worldliness, understood as distraction by materiality and the foolish forgetting of the spiritual Reality or God; terms commonly used in mystic literature for the chasing of evanescent phantoms and mirages which typifies most human beings.

The "fool" is described in this way in a section of the *Dhammapada,* a collection of sayings credited to the Buddha, where the Pali term is *bāla:*

> Long is the night to the wakeful;
> Long is a league to him who is tired;
> Long is the wheel of rebirth *(saṃsāra)* to the foolish
> who do not know the Truth.
>
> If, while travelling,
> a man does not meet his better or his equal,
> he should travel on steadfastly by himself:
> There is no companionship to be had with a fool *(bāla)*....

The fool *(bāla)* who knows his foolishness
  is for that reason deemed a wise man.
The fool *(bāla)* who thinks he is wise
  is truly called a fool *(bāla)*.

Though a fool associate with a wise man all his life,
  he will no more understand the *Dhamma* (Way, Truth, Law)
  than a spoon (can taste) the flavour of soup....

Fools, being of little understanding,
  are enemies of themselves *(attā)*.
Wandering about, they perform evil deeds
  whose fruit is bitter....

For as long as an evil deed bears no fruit,
  a fool *(bāla)* thinks it as sweet as honey.
But when it bears fruit,
  then the fool experiences suffering *(dukkha)*.

Dhammapada 5:1–2, 4–5, 7, 10

The Buddha also contrasts the self-seeking fool with the disciple who seeks wisdom and *nirvāṇa:*

The knowledge acquired by a fool *(bāla)*,
  far from being to his advantage,
  destroys his bright lot,
  and cleaves his own head.

The fool seeks false esteem,
  precedence among *bhikkhus*,
  authority in monasteries,
  and honour from other groups.

Should either householders or monks think:
"I have done everything;
In all things, great or small,
  let them refer to me" –
Such is the ambition of the fool *(bāla)*,
  and thus do his desires and pride increase.

There is one road that leads to (selfish) gain:
  and another leading to *nirvāṇa*.
Realizing this, the *bhikkhu*, the disciple of the Buddha,

should seek no respect from men,
but should cultivate detachment.

Dhammapada 5:13–16

Later Indian mystics have also described the worldly man as a fool. Paltū says:

Speak not of the spiritual path to a fool:
it will only do you harm.
It will do you harm,
for the path is too subtle for him to know.
So complete is the fool's blindness
that no treatment can restore his sight....
Divine knowledge cannot enter the mind of a fool:
it is futile to try.
As a spear fails to penetrate a stone,
and rebounds on striking it,
so, says Paltū, speak not of spiritual matters
to one who lacks receptivity.
Talk not of the spiritual path to a fool:
it will only do you harm.

Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 129, PSB1 pp.55–56

Probably one of the most extensive and often entertaining collections of sayings regarding the fool is to be found in the biblical Wisdom literature. From a spiritual point of view, the fool is depicted as one who ignores God, the wise man as one who seeks Him:

The fool says in his heart,
"There is no God."
Their deeds are corrupt and vile,
there is not one good man left.
Yahweh is looking down from heaven
at the sons of men,
to see if a single one is wise,
if a single one is seeking God.

Psalm 14:1–2, JB

Likewise, it is said that "Wisdom", the creative Power, seeks the heart of the wise, having no place in the worldly "fool":

In the hearts of discerning men, Wisdom makes her home:
within the fool she has no place at all.

Proverbs 14:33, JB

In the tradition of wisdom literature, there are a great many sayings of a more moralistic nature contrasting the fool and the wise man. Even so, the wise man is always godly, while the fool is given to worldliness and bad behaviour:

> The joy of the fool lies in doing wrong,
> but the joy of the man of discernment is acquiring wisdom.
>
> *Proverbs 10:23, JB*

> The wise man's heart leads him aright,
> the fool's heart leads him astray.
> A fool has only to walk along the road
> and, having no sense,
> he makes plain to all what a fool he is.
>
> *Ecclesiastes 9:2–3, JB*

> Do not be hasty with your resentment,
> for resentment is found in the heart of fools.
> Do not ask why earlier days were better than these,
> for that is not a question prompted by wisdom.
>
> *Ecclesiastes 7:9–11, JB*

And in a longer passage from the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach:*

> The wise man's knowledge will increase like a flood,
> and his advice is like a living spring.
> The heart of a fool is like a broken jar:
> it will not hold any knowledge.
> If a cultured man hears a wise saying,
> he praises it and caps it with another;
> If an imbecile hears it, he laughs at it,
> and tosses it behind his back.
>
> The talk of a fool is like a load on a journey:
> but it is a pleasure to listen to an intelligent man.
> The shrewd man's utterance
> will be eagerly awaited in the assembly:
> What he says will be given serious consideration.
>
> The wisdom of a fool is like the wreckage of a house:
> the knowledge of a dolt is incoherent talk.
> To the senseless fellow instruction is like fetters on his feet,
> like manacles on his right hand.

> A fool laughs at the top of his voice:
> but a man of intelligence quietly smiles.
> To the shrewd man instruction is like a golden ornament,
> like a bracelet on his right arm.
>
> The foot of a fool goes straight into a house:
> but a man of much experience is respectful in his approach;
> A stupid man peeps inside through the door:
> a well-bred man waits outside.
> Listening at doors is a sign of bad upbringing:
> a perceptive man would be ashamed to do so.
>
> The lips of gossips repeat the words of others:
> the words of wise men are carefully weighed.
> The heart of fools is exposed in their words:
> the words of wise men reveal their heart.
>
> When a godless man curses his enemy,
> he is cursing himself.
> The scandalmonger sullies himself,
> and earns the hatred of the neighbourhood.
>
> *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach 21:13–28, JB*

The attitude of the fool is summarized in a Pythagorean text from early Christian times:

> Our swerving and departure from God necessarily throw us into folly, and into a rashness of choice without reflection.
>
> *Hieroclēs, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 54–60, HVP p.112*

The fool has always been the butt of humorous stories, and the well-known thirteenth-century Sufi mystic, Rūmī, one of the world's greatest spiritual storytellers, has much to say about the worldly fool in his *Maśnavī*. "The fool," he says, "ever walks crookedly on the way."[1] He also quotes Muḥammad: "Enmity proceeding from wisdom is better than the love that comes from a fool."[2] Among his many stories about fools is that of the fool who trusted a bear. Having saved the life of a bear, a man is befriended by it. A well-wisher – a mystic – tries to tell the man that his friendship will end in disaster. But the man with the bear misconstrues the motives of his would-be friend, and places his reliance in the bear. The bear symbolizes the world and man's lower, worldly nature:

The friendship of the fool is woe and perdition: hear this tale as a parable. A dragon was pulling a bear into its jaws; a valiant man went and succoured it.... The bear ... when it was delivered from the dragon and received such kindness from that brave man – became an attendant at the heels of him that bore the burden (of the fight). That Muslim, from fatigue, laid down his head to rest: the bear, from devotion to him, became his guard.

A certain man passed by and said to him, "What has happened? O brother, who is this bear to you?" He recounted the adventure, and the story of the dragon. The other said, "Do not set your heart on a bear, O fool! The friendship of a fool is worse than his enmity: this bear ought to be driven away by every means you know."

The man with the bear said to himself, "By God, he has said this from envy; otherwise," he said aloud, "why do you look at its bearishness? Behold its affection for me!"

"The affection of fools," said the other, "is beguiling; this envy of mine is better than its affection. Hey, come with me and drive away this bear. Do not choose the bear (as your friend); do not forsake one of your own kind!"

"Go! Go!", said he, "Mind your own business, O envious man!"

Said the other, "This was my business, but it was not your part to follow it. I am not less than a bear, O noble sir. Abandon it, in order that I may be your comrade. My heart is trembling with anxiety for you: do not go into a forest with a bear like this. This heart of mine has never trembled in vain; this is the light of God, not pretence or idle brag. I am the true believer who has become seeing by the light of God. Beware and beware! Flee from this fire temple!"

He said all this, and it entered not the ear of the man with the bear: suspicion is a thick barrier to a man. He took his hand, and the man withdrew his hand from him. The other said, "I will go, since you are not a well-guided friend."

"Go!", cried he, "Be not troubled for me; don't retail so much wisdom, O meddlesome one!"

He answered him, "I am not your enemy: it would be a kindness if you would come after me."

"I am sleepy," said he, "Let me alone; go!"

He replied, "Pray, give in to your friend, so that you may sleep under the safeguard of a sage, under the protection of one loved (by God); a man of spiritual insight."

The man was thrown by the other's earnestness into a groundless fancy. He became angry and quickly averted his face, thinking,

"Maybe this man has come to attack me – he is a murderer; or he has some hope of gain – he is a beggar and a tout; or he has wagered with his friends that he will make me afraid of this companion." From the wickedness of his heart, not even one good surmise came into his thoughts at all. His good opinions were wholly for the bear: to be sure, he was of the same kind as the bear. Through currishness, he suspected a sage and deemed a bear affectionate and just....

The man fell asleep, and the bear kept driving the flies away; but in spite of him they soon came back again. Several times he drove them from the youth's face, but soon they came hurrying back once more. The bear was enraged with the flies and went off. He picked up a very big stone from the mountainside. He fetched the stone, and saw the flies again settled comfortably on the face of the sleeper. He took up that millstone and struck at the flies, in order that they might retire.

The stone made powder of the sleeping man's face, and published to the whole world this adage: "The love of a fool is for sure the love of a bear: his hate is love and his love is hate." His promise is infirm and corrupt and feeble; his word stout and his performance lean. Do not believe him, even if he takes an oath: the man whose speech is false will break his oath.... His lower nature *(nafs)* is in command, and his intellect captive; even suppose that he has sworn on a hundred thousand *Qur'āns.*

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1931–32, 2010–35, 2124–32, 2134; cf. MJR2 pp.320, 324–26, 328, 331

See also: **Error, illusion, spiritual ignorance**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:328, *MJR2* p.238.
2. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:1877, *MJR2* p.317.

forgetfulness The tendency to fail to remember or recall things; spiritually, the failure to remember God, which characterizes most souls in the material world. Although God is the inner essence of being, He is readily forgotten because the attention is drawn to the peripheral world of the senses, and gets absorbed there in a multitude of pleasures, pains and activities.

Human forgetfulness of God has been referred to by many mystics. For the gnostics of early Christian times, it was an essential aspect of their mythology. The soul is brought down into the realm of matter by the *archons* and rulers, and becomes entirely forgetful of her origin. The body itself is called the "fetter of forgetfulness"[1] and other similar names. This forget-

fulness is commonly associated with spiritual "darkness", "death", "ignorance" and "sleep", brought about by worldliness:

> My son, listen to my teaching, which is good and useful, and end the sleep which weighs heavily upon you. Depart from the forgetfulness which fills you with darkness....
>
> What else is evil death except ignorance? What else is evil darkness except familiarity with forgetfulness! Cast your anxiety upon God alone. Do not become desirous of gold and silver which are profitless, but clothe yourself with Wisdom like a robe. Wear knowledge like a crown, and be seated upon a throne of perception. For these are yours, and you will receive them again on high another time.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 88–89; cf. NHS30 pp.290–93*

The soul's remembrance or recollection of her divine origin lies in the hands of a Saviour. Hence, in the *First Apocalypse of James,* James says to the risen Jesus:

> You have come with knowledge *(gnosis),*
> that you might rebuke their forgetfulness.
> You have come with recollection,
> that you might rebuke their ignorance.
>
> *First Apocalypse of James 28, NHS11 pp.74–77*

The thirteenth-century Sufi, Rūmī, refers to a verse in the *Qur'ān* which begs forgiveness for such forgetfulness, even though it arises from negligent reverence or worship of God:

> "Do not punish if we forget"
> is evidence that forgetfulness *(nisyān)* too,
> in a certain way, is sinful,
> because the forgetful one did not attain to complete reverence,
> or else forgetfulness *(nisyān)* would not have assailed him.
> Although forgetfulness *(nisyān)* was necessary and inevitable,
> he was a free agent in the way by which it came about;
> For he showed remissness in his feelings of reverence,
> so that forgetfulness *(nisyān)*
> was born of negligence and trespass.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:4101–4; cf. MJR6 p.246*

The metaphor is perhaps an obvious one, and many have used it. Thus, the poet, William Wordsworth, writes that the soul is born into forgetfulness of God:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
hath had elsewhere its setting,
and cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
and not in utter nakedness,
but trailing clouds of glory do we come
from God, who is our home.
William Wordsworth, Intimations of Immortality

See also: **ghaflah**.

1. *Apocryphon of John* 21, *NHS33* p.123.

galut *Lit.* exile; as of the children of Israel in Babylon during the sixth century BCE. Mystically, *galut* is the soul's separation from God. Jewish mystics understood the exile of the Jewish people from the Holy Land to be a metaphor for the soul's state of exile, in the material world, from the eternity of God.

See **exile**.

game An amusement, pastime, diversion, sport; used metaphorically in several ways in mystical literature. God is said to play the game of worship with Himself; *Iblīs,* the devil, is also said to tempt souls to play his game, and so on. Thus, Rūmī speaks of God's game of worship:

You have contrived this 'I' and 'we' in order that
You might play the game *(nard)* of worship with Yourself,
that all 'I's' and 'you's' should become one soul,
and should at last be submerged in the Beloved.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1787–88; cf. MJR2 p.98

Rūmī also describes the activities of *Iblīs* (the devil) as a "game" which the soul should decline to play with him:

Our God has also proclaimed in our *Qur'ān,*
the insolvency of *Iblīs,* saying,
"He is a swindler and insolvent and a liar:
do not make any partnership,
or play any game *(bāzī)* with him."

And if you do so, bringing vain pretexts to him,
he is insolvent: how will you profit from him?

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:654–56; cf. MJR2 p.255

The reason is simple, says Rūmī: *Iblīs* has so many "formidable moves" that no one can hope to vanquish him:

Iblīs calls you "darling son!" – Beware!
The accursed devil does so in order that
he may beguile you with vain words.
He practised such an imposture on your father:
this black-faced one checkmated Adam.
This crow is busy on the chessboard:
look not upon his game *(bāzī)* with an eye that is half asleep,
because he knows many formidable moves
which will stick in your throat like a straw.
His straw will stay in your throat for years.
What is that straw? Love of rank and wealth.
Wealth is the straw, since in your throat, O infirm one,
it is an obstacle to the Water of Life.
If an artful enemy should carry off your wealth,
a robber will have carried off a robber.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:128–34; cf. MJR2 p.228

See also: **khayāl, līlā, makr al-Ḥaqq** (6.3).

ghaflah (A), **ghaflat** (P) *Lit.* heedlessness, negligence, neglect, carelessness, forgetfulness; spiritually, forgetfulness of the divine Reality; hence, *ghāfil* (pl. *ghāfilūn,* heedless, forgetful) and *khvāb-i ghaflat* (the sleep of ignorance); the characteristic of most souls in the physical universe. According to the *Qur'ān:*

God *(Allāh)* fails not His promise,
but most men know it not.
They know but the surface appearance
of the life of this world;
But of the hereafter, they are heedless *(ghāfilūn).*

Qur'ān 30:6–7, KI

The *ghāfilūn,* the heedless ones, are those who are indifferent to God and the spiritual Reality. Their minds are entirely occupied with the affairs of this world; they never consider the fact that everything here is transitory,

and will sooner or later be taken away. Like one who runs heedlessly and at full speed towards a precipice, they are quite unprepared for the sudden fall – death. There is a *ḥadīth* which runs:

> I wonder that man should seek the world
> when death in turn seeks him.
> I wonder that man should be forgetful *(ghāfil)*,
> when he is not forgotten *(maghfūlun 'anhu)*.
> I wonder also at he who laughs heartily,
> without knowing whether (God) is pleased with him,
> or angry.
>
> *Ḥadīth 763, in RHP p.217*

Rūmī says that "heedlessness" is essential if the world is to continue in existence:

> Now the world continues through heedlessness *(ghaflat);* were it not for heedlessness *(ghaflat)*, this world would cease to be. Yearning for God, recollection of the world to come, intoxication and ecstasy – these are the architects of the other world. If everyone were attuned to that world, we would all leave this world and go there. God, however, wants us to be here, so that there may be two worlds. To that end, He has appointed two headmen, one heedlessness *(ghaflat)*, the other heedfulness *(bīdārī)*, so that both worlds should remain inhabited.
>
> *Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi 25:6–9, KFF p.109; cf. DRA p.120, SOU p.114*

In another passage, Rūmī extols the virtues of *ghaflat*, tongue in cheek. Only a "trickle" of "spiritual wisdom" gets through to this world, he says, so that it should not become wholly evil:

> (The Prophet said:) "If man were to remain
> in the fire (of divine longing),
> much ruin and loss would befall.
> This world would at once become desolate:
> selfish desires would go forth from men."
>
> Forgetfulness *(ghaflat)* (of God), O beloved,
> is the pillar of this world:
> Spiritual wisdom is a bane to this world.
> Wisdom belongs to that other world,
> and when it prevails, this world is overthrown.
> Wisdom is the sun, and greed the ice;
> Wisdom is the water, and this world the dirt.

A little trickle is coming from yonder world
  that cupidity and envy may not roar in this world.
If the trickle from the Unseen should become greater,
  in this world neither virtue nor vice would be left.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2064–70; cf. MJR2 p.112

Rūmī says that *ghaflat* is the "pillar of this world". He also likens human beings to a "cow", enjoying food and care from the "butchers", unmindful of the butchers' real intentions:

If the cow were acquainted with the butchers,
  how should she follow them to that shop;
Or eat bran from their hands,
  or give them milk on account of being coaxed?
And if she ate, how should the fodder be digested by her,
  if she were aware of the purpose of the fodder?
Heedlessness *(ghaflat),* then, is indeed
  the pillar of this world.

Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1327–30; cf. MJR4 p.345

Sarmad, the seventeenth-century Jewish mystic of India, also writes of "heedlessness":

From fear and illusion,
  the wealth of life is wasted in heedlessness *(ghaflat).*

Sarmad, Rubā'īyāt-i Sarmad 184; cf. RIS p.32

And speaking of the "tavern" of this world, he says that the "Cupbearer", the divine Beloved, the Saint, brings the *jām-i jahān numā,* the "cup that reflects the world". He is alluding to the mythological cup of Jamshīd *(jām-i Jamshīd)* in which King Jamshīd could see everything in the world, including the past and the future. Metaphorically, this "cup" contains the blessings of the divine "Cupbearer" who bestows on his disciples the "eternal wealth" of mystic vision in which all things are seen and understood. "Be not negligent *(ghāfil)*" of this blessing, counsels Sarmad:

In this tavern, O friend, be not without the Beloved:
  be never without the rosy-cheeked *Sāqī* (Cupbearer)!
This cup that reflects the world *(jām-i jahān numā)*
  is not granted to everyone:
Be not negligent *(ghāfil)* towards this eternal wealth.

Sarmad, Rubā'īyāt-i Sarmad 170; cf. RIS p.29

In a similar vein, the Indian Sufi, Sulṭān Bāhū, puts it simply:

> Every moment you are forgetful *(ghāfil)* (of God)
> you are an unbeliever *(kāfir)*.
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 59, SBU p.332; cf. SBE (57) pp.268–69*

See also: **forgetfulness**.

gharīb (A/P/Pu) *Lit.* alien, foreigner, traveller, stranger; also, poor, penniless, helpless, friendless; metaphorically, it is said that man should lead a detached life in this world, like that of a stranger. According to a *ḥadīth,* Muḥammad once said:

> Live in this world as if you are a stranger *(gharīb)*
> or a traveller.
> *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 8:76.425, in RSN (471) p.280*

Man is also often depicted as a spiritually impoverished stranger or wanderer in the world, roaming far from his true spiritual home. Guru Rāmdās says that he will do anything to win the Lord's favour:

> I wave fan over and draw water for Thee:
> whatever Thou givest me, that I eat.
> Poor *(gharīb)* Nānak has fallen at Thy door:
> it is to Thine glory to unite me with Thee, O my Lord.
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 757, MMS*

See also: **alien**.

grave A place for the burial of a corpse; a tomb. An expression commonly used in mystical writings for the physical body. Taking birth in this world is described as death, because the soul is cut off from its source of life and light. Hence, the body is a grave or a tomb. This is Jesus' meaning in John's gospel when he says:

> Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming,
> in the which all that are in the graves
> shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth.
> *John 5:28–29, KJV*

Those "that are in the graves" are the people of this world. But those who hear the Voice of the Son of God "shall come forth" from their graves. When they hear the divine Music or the mystic Voice within, they will be able to leave their bodies. This is the only resurrection that mystics teach.

Likewise, in the *Books of the Saviour*, Matthew interprets a line from one of the *Odes of Solomon* to mean:

> You have freed them from the graves,
> and have removed them from the midst of the corpses.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 158:71; cf. PS pp.316–17, PSGG p.131*

The soul who is so raised is "removed" from the company of "corpses", the spiritually dead people in the graveyard of the world.

See also: **death**, **resurrection** (▸2), **tomb**.

habā', al- (A/P) *Lit.* the dust; an Arabic term used for matter, the substance of the physical universe. The term predates its synonym *al-hayūlá*, derived from the Greek *hylē*. As terms for matter, and even for the body, 'dust', 'clay' and 'earth' have been commonly used by mystics in a variety of languages. *Al-habā'* is also used for primordial 'matter', the subtle essence of matter out of which the physical universe is created.

See also: **al-hayūlá**.

harlots See **publicans and harlots**.

hayūlá, al- (A/P) *Lit.* matter, substance; an Arabic term derived from the Greek *hylē*, which originally meant 'wood', and came to be the common mystical term for matter:

> *Hayūlá* comes from a Greek word meaning origin and matter. In philosophy, it denotes that essence in the body which accepts whatever happens to the body in the form of attachment or detachment. It is where the various categories of physical form appear.
>
> *Jurjānī, Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt, in FLTM9 p.336*

> With scholars, it is that which accepts forms in an absolute way, without being designated to a specific form; it is also called matter.
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, in FLTM9 p.336*

Habā', dust, was also used as a generic term for the stuff out of which the material universe is made. *Hayūlá* was adopted into Arabic as philosophy and metaphysics developed as a branch of Islamic learning.

See also: **al-habā'**, **hylē**.

ḥijāb, al- (A/P) *Lit.* the veil, the curtain, the partition; the traditional veil worn by Muslim women; also used as the plural form; mystically, anything that hides the inner reality; that which makes the Unseen *(al-Ghayb)* to be unseen; any obstruction in the spiritual path; anything which obscures mystical perception; whatever causes the heart to turn away from contemplation and knowledge of God.

In one of the *ḥadīth* (traditional sayings) of Muḥammad, *Allāh* is said to hide Himself behind a veil of lesser light or fire, since the sight of Him would bring the creation to an end:

> Abū Mūsá, may *Allāh* be pleased with him, reported: *Allāh*'s Messenger (may peace be upon him) was standing among us and he told us five things. He said: "Verily, the Exalted and Mighty *Allāh* does not sleep, and it does not befit Him to sleep. He lowers the scale and lifts it. The deeds in the night are taken up to Him before the deeds of the day, and the deeds of the day before the deeds of the night. His veil *(ḥijāb)* is the light *(nūr)*.... If He withdraws it (the veil), the splendour of His countenance would consume His creation so far as His sight reaches."
>
> *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, HIC 103 (263), SM1 79:179*

Sufis have been common users of the metaphor. In *Kashf al-Maḥjūb (Unveiling the Veiled),* Hujwīrī writes of eleven veils on the path to God, saying that the *nafs,* the sensual part of man's being, is the centre of "veiling *(ḥijāb)*".[1] Likewise, Rūmī points to "self-interest" as the origin of a "hundred veils":

> When self-interest appears, virtue becomes hidden:
> a hundred veils *(ḥijāb)* rise from the heart to the eye.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:334, MJR2 p.21*

Ḥijāb also appears in a number of expressions such as *ḥijāb-i ẓalmānī* (veil of obscurity or darkness), *ḥijāb-i raynī* (veil of covering), *ḥijāb-i abr* (veil of cloud), *ḥijāb-i ghaynī* (veil of clouding), *ḥijāb al-'izzah* (purblindness, perplexity). As Rūmī points out, "selflessness is cloudlessness"; for as long as an individual lives within the limitations of the self, he remains under

the veil of clouding, a veil that blocks the divine light. This veil or "cloud" of the self and body "has caused" the mind "to conceive fantasies":

> Selflessness is cloudlessness, O well-disposed one:
> in selflessness, you will be like the orb of the moon.
> Again, when a cloud comes, driven along, the light goes:
> of the moon, there remains but a phantom.
> Its light is made feeble by the veil of cloud *(ḥijāb-i abr):*
> that noble full moon becomes less than the new moon.
> The moon is made to appear a phantom by clouds and dust:
> the cloud, the body, has caused us to conceive fantasies.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:684–87; cf. MJR6 p.43*

Al-ḥijāb also refers to the creation. That is, all the levels of creation below that which is permanent and unchanging are veils over God's face. In fact, according to a Sufi tradition, there are "seventy thousand veils" separating *Allāh* from the "world of matter and of sense". W.H.T. Gairdner is paraphrasing al-Ghazālī, when he writes:

> Seventy thousand veils separate *Allāh,* the one Reality, from the world of matter and of sense. And every soul passes before his birth through these seventy thousand. The inner half of these are veils of light: the outer half, veils of darkness. For every one of the veils of light passed through, in this journey towards birth, the soul puts off a divine quality: and for every one of the dark veils, it puts on an earthly quality. Thus the child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from *Allāh,* the one Reality. And when the child cries in its sleep, it is because the soul remembers something of what it has lost. Otherwise, the passage through the veils has brought with it forgetfulness *(nisyān):* and for this reason man is called *insān.*[2] He is now, as it were, in prison in his body, separated by these thick curtains from *Allāh.*
>
> But the whole purpose of Sufism, the way of the dervish, is to give him an escape from this prison, an apocalypse of the seventy thousand veils, a recovery of the original unity with the One, while still in this body. The body is not to be put off; it is to be refined and made spiritual – a help and not a hindrance to the spirit. It is like a metal that has to be refined by fire and transmuted. And the *Shaykh* tells the aspirant that he has the secret of this transmutation. "We shall throw you into the fire of spiritual passion," he says, "and you will emerge refined."
>
> *W.H.T. Gairdner, WMM p.9ff., in MOI pp.15–16*

Al-Ghazālī speaks again of these "seventy thousand veils" in his *Mishkāt al-Anwār (Niche for Lights)* when explaining the *ḥadīth* concerning *Allāh*'s veil:

> *Allāh* has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness: "Were He to withdraw their curtain, then would the splendours of His face surely consume everyone who apprehended Him with his sight."[3]
>
> *Al-Ghazālī, Mishkāt al-Anwār 3, MRG4 p.27, MAG p.47; cf. FSC (3.2) p.149*

Seventy times something is commonly used in Arabic to denote a large number, and al-Ghazālī also points out that some variants of the *ḥadīth* speak of seven hundred (ten times seventy).

See also: **al-Ghayb** (4.1).

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XI:52, *KM* p.149.
2. Al-Ghazālī is relating the phonetic similarity of *nisyān* (forgetfulness) to *insān* (man); *nisyān* is not the etymological root of *insān.*
3. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, SM1* 79:179.

huàn hsiàng (huàn xiàng), huàn mèng (huàn mèng) (C) *Lit.* illusory *(huàn)* appearance, image or shape *(hsiàng)* or dream *(mèng);* thus, mirage, phantom, illusion; Taoist terms expressing a fundamental Taoist doctrine that the physical world as experienced through the senses does not represent reality as it really is, but is more like an illusion or a dream.

See also: **dream, illusion (in Taoism)**.

huntress A woman who seeks out other creatures with the intention of killing or capturing, either for sport or food, or both. The Indian mystic, Kabīr, likens *māyā* (illusion), the 'companion' of the negative power, to a huntress. She is, even so, doing the will of the Divine; she is a "servant of the Lord":

> This crazy *māyā,* a servant of the Lord,
> has set out on a chase,
> keen on the scent of her prey.
> One by one she picks out the clever, the wise,
> and the sophisticated;
> She slays them all, she spares not one.

She slays the *munis* (sages), she slays the brave;
She even slays those who make
the earth and sky their dress (*digambars,* naked ascetics).
She slays the *yogīs* even while they sit in meditation,
she slays the *jangams* (ascetics)
who have made the jungles their home.
No one can subjugate *māyā.*

She slays the erudite who pore over the pages
of the *Vedas* and holy books;
She slays the priest while he performs his worship,
she slays the *paṇdit* while he expounds the scriptures.
She has tamed one and all:
she keeps them under bit and reins....

In the home of the worldly man, she wields the sceptre;
But at the doorstep of true devotees,
she stands an abject slave.
Says Kabīr: listen, O friends,
the moment she approached me, I drove her away.

Kabīr, Bījak, Kaharā 12, KSB p.77

See also: **hunter** (6.1).

hylē (Gk) *Lit.* wood; esoterically, matter; very commonly used in Greek and gnostic texts for matter, as contrasted with spirit. In the Manichaean psalms, the devotee frequently begs for release from "matter *(hylē)*":

All the worldly matter *(hylē)* that surrounds me –
burn it today, I beseech you.
Cleanse me from all the sins,
for I too have hung on your hope.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLII; cf. MPB p.49

The gifts of matter *(hylē)* I have cast away:
your sweet yoke I have received in purity.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVII; cf. MPB p.55

The means of this release is also stated: it is the divine *Nous,* the Mind, Intelligence or *Logos* of God "that subdues matter":

> O *Nous* that subdues matter *(hylē)*,
> spread your mercy upon my spirit.
> I will anchor in your congregation, I, the new man,
> and receive all the gifts which you have promised me,
> which are victory in your eternal kingdom.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCL; cf. MPB p.59*

The term was also used in Jewish and Muslim thought, coming from the Greek through such philosophers as the second-century Alexander of Aphrodisias. Alexander systematized Aristotle's thought and influenced medieval philosophers such as Arabic-speaking Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), and the Arabic philosopher and physician of Spain, Ibn Rushd (1126–1188), also known as Averroës.

Alexander spoke in terms of a passive, hylic or material intelligence in man which received life and energy from the *Nous* or intelligence of God. The hylic intelligence, being essentially material, was considered to be mortal, while the *Nous*, of divine origin, was immortal.

Hylē was also used, in a more general sense, in Kabbalistic philosophy by the fourteenth-century Rabbi Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi for the eternal divine Essence or Substance that preceded the emanation of the creation and the *sefirot* (divine emanations).

See also: **al-hayūlá**.

ignorance See **spiritual ignorance**.

illness See **sickness**.

illusion A false appearance, a deceptive impression; mystically, the illusion of this world and all the realms lying within the orbit of the greater mind; the dance of diversity and multiplicity created by the mind over the face of the divine oneness; commonly used to translate the Indian, *māyā*. The illusory nature of the world is depicted in the gnostic *Book of Thomas the Contender:*

> To the fool … good and bad are the same.…
> For that which guides them …
> will give them an illusion of truth,
> and will shine on them with a perishable beauty;
> And it will imprison them in a dark sweetness,
> and captivate them with fragrant pleasure.

And it will blind them with insatiable lust,
  and burn their souls and become for them
  like a stake stuck in their heart,
  which they can never dislodge.
And like a bit in the mouth,
  it leads them according to its own desire.
  Book of Thomas the Contender 140, NHS21 pp.186–89

The author of the *Treatise on the Resurrection* points to the changing nature of things as the source of illusion:

But what am I telling you now?
Those who are living shall die.
How do they live in an illusion?
The rich have become poor,
  and the kings have been overthrown.
Everything is prone to change.
The world is an illusion! –
  lest, indeed, I rail at things to excess!
  Treatise on the Resurrection 48, NHS22 pp.154–55

See also: **Error, forgetfulness, māyā, spiritual ignorance**.

illusion (in Taoism) (C. *mèng huàn, huàn mèng*) The Taoist terms, *mèng huàn* (dreamlike illusion, dreamlike fantasy) and *huàn mèng* (illusory dream) encapsulate a fundamental Taoist doctrine that the physical world as experienced through the senses does not represent the true reality of things. It is more of an illusion or a dream, because things experienced here are transient, and are relative to the person observing them.

To the Taoist, the nature of the physical world is governed by the principle of duality; the polarities that exist in all phenomena. In Chinese thought, these polarities are called *yīn* and *yáng*. *Yīn* represents one pole or extreme and *yáng* represents the opposite, and it is their interrelationships, combinations and fluctuations that determine the qualities and characteristics of all phenomena in the universe. This seesaw motion causes a continual waxing and waning of relative dominance that is the cause of all change in the physical world. Taoists call this constancy of change *(ì)*. Further, it is the nature of human beings to discriminate and categorize all things and experiences: one thing is considered superior while another is inferior; one opinion is right, while another is wrong; things are pleasurable and painful; there is light and dark, hot and cold. Therefore, what may appear to be true to one person may be the complete opposite to another. Taoists believe that

only when a person experiences the underlying oneness of *Tào* can he transcend all manner of discrimination, preference and categorization and, as a result, no longer live in the illusion of duality.

The famous Taoist sage Lǎo Tzu explains that it is the mind's habit of categorizing all things which reinforces this illusion:

> When all the world understands beauty to be beautiful,
>   then ugliness exists.
> When all understand goodness to be good,
>   then evil exists.
> Thus existence suggests nonexistence;
> Easy gives rise to difficult;
> Short is derived from long by comparison;
> Low is distinguished from high by position;
> Resonance harmonizes sound;
> After follows before.
> Therefore the sage carries on his business
>   without action (attachment to preferences),
>   and gives his teaching without words.
>
> *Lǎo Tzu, Tào Té Chīng 2, TTCT p.13*

Another classical Taoist sage, Chuāng Tzu, further illustrates the problem of relativity:

> Right is not right; so is not so.
> If right were really right,
>   it would differ so clearly from not right
>   that there would be no need for argument.
> If so were really so,
>   it would differ so clearly from not so
>   that there would be no need for argument.
> Forget the years; forget distinctions:
> Leap into the boundless, and make it your home!
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, CTW pp.48–49*

It is "the boundless", or *Tào,* where all things are understood to be the same, having the same root. The human intellect constantly draws distinctions and makes judgments, but Chuāng Tzu indicates that there is actually no such thing as absolute right and wrong. It is all subjective, since nothing is permanent and absolute in the illusory world of duality. Chuāng Tzu illustrates this idea further in a story concerning the human expression of continual dismay and delight at the changing events of life. He makes the point that there is an "Equalizer" or Oneness underlying all the seeming differences:

> To wear out your brain trying to make things into one without realizing that they are all the same – this is called "three in the morning". What do I mean by "three in the morning"? When the monkey trainer was handing out acorns, he said, "You get three in the morning and four at night." This made all the monkeys furious. "Well, then," he said, "you get four in the morning, and three at night." The monkeys were all delighted. There was no change in the reality behind the words, and yet the monkeys responded with joy and anger. Let them, if they want to. So the sage harmonizes with both right and wrong, and rests in Heaven the Equalizer. This is called walking two roads.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, CTW p.41*

The mind is easily satisfied when circumstances are rearranged, even though the actual nature of the situation remains unchanged. But "walking two roads" implies that the sage – the one who knows the underlying reality of *Tào* – is able to live in the world of duality *(yīn yáng)*, while at the same time knowing the "Equalizer" or *Tào.*

Lièh Tzu, another well-known early Taoist sage, describes how duality or the principle of *yīn yáng* is the basis of a constantly changing world; yet when seen from an enlightened eye, all phenomena are really an illusion manifesting in myriad forms:

> Lǎo Ch'éng Tzu studied magic under Master Yīn Wén, who told him nothing for three years. Lǎo Ch'éng Tzu asked what he had done wrong, and offered to leave. Master Yīn Wén bowed him inside the house, shut the door on his attendants, and talked with him:
>
> "Formerly, as Lǎo Tzu was setting out for the West, he looked back and told me: 'The breath of all that lives, the appearance of all that has shape, is illusion. What is begun by the creative process, and changed by the *yīn* and *yáng*, is said to be born and to die; things which, already shaped, are displaced and replaced by a comprehension of numbers and understanding of change, are said to be transformed; to be illusions of magic. The skill of the Creator is inscrutable, His achievement profound, so that it is long before His work completes its term and comes to an end.
>
> "The skill of the magician working on the shapes of things is obvious, but his achievement shallow, so that his work is extinguished as soon as it is conjured up. It is when you realize that the illusions and transformations of magic are no different from birth and death that it becomes worthwhile to study magic with you. You and I are also illusion; what is there to study?'"
>
> *Lièh Tzu 3, BLT p.65*

The illusory nature of the world of *yīn* and *yáng* is also likened to a dream. Experiences in the world of duality seem real until *Tào* is tasted. When experienced fully, *Tào* awakens a person completely from the unreal "dream" of duality. Chuāng Tzu illustrates this point:

> We go around telling each other, I do this, I do that – but how do we know that this 'I' we talk about has any 'I' to it? You dream you're a bird and soar up to the sky; you dream you're a fish and dive down in the pool. But now when you tell me about it, I don't know whether you are awake or whether you are dreaming. Running around accusing others is not as good as laughing, and enjoying a good laugh is not as good as going along with things. Be content to go along, and forget about change, and then you can enter the mysterious oneness of Heaven.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 6, CTW pp.88–89*

Likewise, Chuāng Tzu also says:

> Those who dream of (the pleasures of) drinking may in the morning wail and weep; those who dream of wailing and weeping may in the morning be going out to hunt. When they were dreaming, they did not know it was a dream; in their dream, they may even have tried to interpret it; but when they awoke they knew that it was a dream. And there is the great awakening, after which we shall know that this life was a great dream. All the while, the stupid think they are awake, and with nice discrimination insist on their knowledge; now playing the part of rulers and now of grooms. Bigoted was that *Ch'iū* (Confucius)! He and you are both dreaming. I who say that you are dreaming am dreaming myself. These words seem very strange; but if, after ten thousand ages, we once meet with a great sage who knows how to explain them, it will be as if we met him (unexpectedly) some morning or evening.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, TT1 pp.194–95*

This idea of external reality being no more than a dream within a dream is expressed in one of the most famous anecdotes of Chuāng Tzu:

> Once Chuāng Chōu dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Chuāng Chōu. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuāng Chōu. But he didn't know if he was Chuāng Chōu who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuāng Chōu. Between Chuāng Chōu and a

> butterfly, there must be some distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, CTW p.49*

Raising the consciousness above the world of illusion, beyond this dream-like state, can be a long and difficult process, because it is the ego or sense of individual self that creates the sense of duality. The Taoist attempts to cultivate a different consciousness, that of experiencing the underlying Oneness or *Tào* and, by so doing, he slowly diminishes his identification with the world of opposites and increases his identification with *Tào:*

> Whether you point to a little stalk or a great pillar, a leper or the beautiful Hsī Shīh (a legendary maiden of extraordinary beauty), things ribald and shady or things grotesque and strange, the Way makes them all into one. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment. No thing is either complete or impaired, but all are made into one again. Only the man of far reaching vision knows how to make them into one. So he has no use (for categories), but relegates all to the constant *(Tào)*. The constant is the useful; the useful is the passable; the passable is the successful; and with success, all is accomplished. He relies upon this alone; relies upon it and does not know he is doing so. This is called the Way.
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 2, CTW pp.40–41*

See also: **dream**, **māyā**, **yīn yáng** (5.2).

impermanence Transience, evanescence. The impermanence of physical life is not something that can be refuted. Everything changes with time, and everyone has to die. Hence, the Native North American, Black Elk, writes:

> It is good to have a reminder of death before us, for it helps us to understand the impermanence of life on this earth, and this understanding may aid us in preparing for our own death. He who is well prepared is he who knows that he is nothing compared with *Wakan-Tanka* (the Great Spirit), who is everything; then he knows that world which is real.
>
> *Black Elk, in SP p.8*

See also: **illusion**.

iniquity See **sin and evil**.

intoxication Inebriation, drunkenness, great elation; being under the influence of some strong feeling or experience; in a worldly sense, under the influence of alcohol or of some powerful sensory delight. Mystically, the term is used either for the intoxication and total absorption in the sensory world which leads a person to forget or ignore his impending death, or for the intoxication and ecstasy of divine love.

See also: **drunkenness**, **wine** (▸2).

ishtibāh (A/P) *Lit.* perplexity; hence, doubt; spiritually, the perplexity experienced in discriminating between the true and the false, the real and the unreal. Rūmī says that this perplexity arises from the mind being dispersed and scattered into the creation:

> You must unite the parts by means of love,
> to the end that you may become
> sweet as Samarkand and Damascus.
> When you become united, grain by grain,
> from your dispersion *(ishtibāh)*,
> then it is possible to stamp the King's die upon you.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3289–90; cf. MJR4 pp.453–54*

He advises the soul lost in the confusion and perplexity of separation from God to begin the slow process of gathering together the scattered attention, so as to return to the divine King.

ithm (A), **iśm** (P) *Lit.* sin; specifically, a wilful and intentional sin.

See also: **dhanb**.

jaḍ(a) (S/H), **jaṛ** (H) *Lit.* inert, heavy, insentient, inanimate, lifeless; unconscious as opposed to conscious *(chetan);* matter as opposed to spirit *(chetan):* also, senseless, stupid, irrational, cold, numb. The essence of life is spirit or consciousness. The essence of God is the same.

Above the level of the universal mind, all is pure spirit; there is nothing unconscious about it; there is no deception or illusion; there is no mind and *māyā* (illusion). When the soul comes into contact with the mind on its downward descent, it makes its first contact with that which is other than spirit. This is the beginning of unconsciousness *(jaṛ)*. As the soul descends further, it becomes increasingly covered with various essences or energies

of the mind, until at the physical level, it becomes encased in the most crystallized form of mind energy – gross matter. All these forms, energies or crystallizations of mind are unconscious and, by covering the soul, whose essence is self-conscious *(chetan)*, they effectively rob it of the knowledge of its own pure consciousness or spirituality.

These mind energies, and their crystallized forms as material substance, are all unconscious *(jaṛ)*, and a soul encased in these forms is also – to a greater or lesser extent – unconscious. The lower the species on the scale of consciousness, the more unconscious *(jaṛ)* it is. In the material world, the vegetable kingdom is the lowest form of life, in terms of its consciousness, while man is at the top. In fact, even taking into account all other forms in which souls may reside – in the heavenly regions – man is still classed as the top of creation because it is only in human form that the journey to God can be begun and even completed. Only when a soul rises above mind and *māyā*, does it becomes truly conscious once again. Then the knot between the conscious *(chetan)* and the unconscious *(jaṛ)* is untied.

Tulsīdās says that the soul, which is conscious, is tightly knotted together with the mind and with matter, which are unconscious energies:

> The unconscious *(jaṛ)* and the conscious *(chetan)*
> have been knotted together;
> Though the knot is unreal,
> it is hard to unravel.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:116.2, RCM p.1156*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh encourages the conscious *(chetan)* soul to separate itself from all that is inert *(jaṛ)*:

> O soul, I know that you have been sad
> since the day you ignored the Word *(Shabd)*,
> and made friends with the mind.
> The foolish mind is attached to the body,
> and attracted by sensual tastes.
> Your family and relatives all bring misery,
> but you are caught in their company.
> You are conscious *(chetan)*,
> all else is inert *(jaṛ)* and illusion *(mithyā)*.
> Why do you keep their company?
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 14:10.1–4, SBP p.113*

Jaṛ is also used for the stage of meditation in which the practitioner becomes unconscious *(jaṛ)* of the world and of the interplay of the pairs of opposites.

See also: **achet**.

jagat, jagat jāl (H/Pu) *Lit.* net *(jāl)* of the world *(jagat). Jagat* means that which moves, that which is subject to change and destruction; hence, the world, the universe, all created things. Mystics say that human beings waste their time in this world:

> What have you accomplished by coming to this world *(jagat)?*
> You have only worried about your livelihood:
> You have spent the day in business,
> and the night in sleeping.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Vṛidh Avasthā 88, SBB p.26*

Nothing is of value if God is forgotten:

> Moving about in the world *(jagat),*
> the Lord is fixed firmly in your heart.
> If you do not recognize His Name,
> all else you know will be as dust.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Bārahmāsī, Pūsh 7–8, TDB p.4*

In fact, everything exists by virtue of God's pervading presence:

> O merciful Lord, all glory be to You:
> You are the support of the world *(jagat).*
>
> *Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 13:4, SSR p.127*

Jagat jāl is used metaphorically for the manner by which souls are trapped by the illusion of this world:

> The snare of the world *(jagat jāl)* is all an illusion:
> you have befriended the foolish mind.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:11.13, SBP p.120*

And:

> You remain entangled in the net of the world *(jagat jāl),*
> and repeatedly suffer transmigration *(chaurāsī).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:8.38, SBP p.193*

See also: **jāl, jañjāl, nets**.

jāgnā (H) *Lit.* to waken, to be awake; to watch, to keep vigil, to become vigilant, to be on the alert; to be refreshed, to brighten. The verb *jāgnā* gives rise to the adjective *jāgrat,* meaning vigilant, waking, awake, on the watch, wakeful. It also appears in the injunction, "*Jāg!* (Awake! Wake up!)".

The waking state *(jāgrat avasthā)* is one of the four states of consciousness described in classical Hindu texts, the other three being *svapna* (dreaming), *sushuptī* (deep sleep) and *turīya* (superconsciousness). Mystics have also used the term metaphorically in the sense that all souls in this physical creation are spiritually asleep. They are unconscious of the spiritual reality, and also live as if they are unaware that death inevitably awaits them. Sahajobāī observes:

> Why do you not sing the praises of the Lord?
> Why is your mind sleeping the sleep of attachment?
> Awake! Awake! *(Jāg! Jāg!)*
> Attach your mind to the Lord.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Rāg Bilāwal 1, SBB p.60*

And Ravidās asks:

> Why are you sleeping? Wake up, foolish man!
> This false life you have taken to be true.
>
> *Ravidās, Shrī Sant Rohidās, Pad 79:1–2, SSR p.202*

And Sulṭān Bāhū writes more expansively:

> Whether or not you wake up *(jāg na jāg)* now, O *faqīr,*
> you will wake up *(jāgāiā)* to reality in the end.
> Your heart will not awaken *(jāge)*
> merely by sitting with closed eyes;
> It will awaken *(jāge)* when you realize the goal.
>
> *Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 47, SBU p.329; cf. SBE (45) pp.260–61*

See also: **avasthā** (▸2), **dream, khvāb, sleep**.

jāl(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* a net, a snare, a web; hence, mystically, illusion, deception; metaphorically, the net of the mind and also of *māyā* (illusion), which enmeshes all souls:

> Sometimes the mind will deceive you as a friend,
> sometimes it will threaten as an enemy,

sometimes it will entangle you in disease.
In various ways will it spread its net *(jāl)*.
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 19:13.11–12, SBP p.150

Māyā spread out its net *(jāl)*,
and in it has placed the bait:
The avaricious bird (the soul) is snared and cannot escape.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 50, MMS

See also: **jagat jāl**, **jañjāl**, **nets**.

jañjāl (H/Pu), **jañjār** (Pu) *Lit.* net, snare, noose; hence, perplexity, difficulty, trouble, misfortune, entanglement, whirlpool; thus, worldly bonds, the chains of the world:

O my stranger soul, why fallest thou into entanglements *(jañjāl)?*
When the true Lord abides within thy mind,
why shouldst thou be entrapped in Death's (*Jam*, the lord of death) noose *(jāl)?*
The fisherman casts his net *(jāl)*,
the fish leaves the water with tearful eyes.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 439, MMS

The mortal rises early for evil deeds:
When it is the time to contemplate the Lord's Name,
he leisurely sleeps....
The ignorant clown understands not ever:
again and again, he is involved in entanglements *(jañjār)*.
Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 738, MMS

See also: **jagat jāl**, **jāl**, **nets**.

jaṛ chetan (H) *Lit.* conscious *(chetan)* unconscious *(jaṛ)*. The entire physical world is *jaṛ* (unconscious or inert), while the soul is *chetan* (conscious or pure spirit). This fusion of the two has been referred to by Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh as the knot of *jaṛ chetan*. Thus, the liberation of the soul from the world is known as untying the knot of *jaṛ chetan*. For this to happen, the soul must be set "on fire" with divine longing:

He who sets his house on fire
will merge in the cool ocean.

Untying the knot
of the conscious and the unconscious *(jaṛ chetan),*
will let the drop merge into the ocean.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 13:2.1–2, SBP p.108

See also: **jaḍa**.

kājal kī koṭhrī (H/Pu), **kājar koṭh** (Pu) *Lit.* a storeroom *(koṭhrī)* of *(kī)* of lampblack or soot *(kājal);* a chamber of soot; a coal cellar; a room which is entirely covered with soot due to the burning of an oil lamp. *Kājal* is sometimes used as a home-made eye lotion or collyrium, applied by Indian women for cosmetic or medicinal purposes. Metaphorically, the expression, *kājal kī koṭhrī,* is used for some affair or scandal which brings disgrace or suspicion upon a person.

Mystics have sometimes described this world as a *kājal kī koṭhrī,* its walls covered with coal dust, where anyone entering it cannot remain free of the black powder, and where no one can exit without a stain upon his character.

They say this because even a person with the best of intentions cannot avoid creating *karma* in this world. *Karma* is part of the basic fabric of the physical universe. Souls come here because of it and, while here, are forced into performing further actions, into thinking more thoughts, and into desiring more of the world. All of this then reacts in the future by bringing the soul back here to pay off its debt. The world is thus like a coal cellar or a disgraceful affair from which no one escapes untouched. A number of Saints have used the metaphor:

Kabīr, the world is but
a black chamber of the lamp-soot *(kājal kī koṭhrī):*
The blind ones alone fall into its trap.
I am a sacrifice unto those who even when cast into it,
escape unsoiled.

Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1365, MMS

In the chamber of lampblack *(kājar koṭh),*
thou hast not gone black, but thou hast assumed the pure colour.
The great *Mantra (mahā Mantar,* great Word) of the *Guru*
has secured dwelling in my mind,
and I have heard the wondrous Name *(Nām).*

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 384, MMS

Kāl mat (H/Pu) *Lit.* doctrines or teachings *(mat)* of *Kāl* (*lit.* time, lord of death); the path of *Kāl;* religions or philosophies propagated by *Kāl;* spurious, false or misleading doctrines or cults, whether of an apparently spiritual nature or otherwise; all paths or practices that leave a soul within the realms of *Kāl,* the three worlds of the mind. In this context, *Kāl* is being used by the mystics to refer to the negative power, the ruler of the mind worlds – the physical, astral and causal realms. Hence, *Kāl mat* is also called *man mat* (path of the mind). Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh is forthright and explicit, comparing *Kāl mat* with *Dayāl mat* (path of the Merciful):

> The teachings of *Kāl (Kāl mat)* pervade the world;
> No one knows the secret
> of the teachings of the Merciful *(Dayāl mat)*
> The *Vedas,* the *Purāṇas,* the *Shāstras* and the *Smṛitis*
> have blocked the way *(mārg).*
> *Brahmā, Vishṇu, Mahādev, Shakti,*
> and the ten *avatārs* have spread their net;
> And the *gyānīs,* the *yogīs,* the ascetics,
> the celibates and the anchorites have all been deluded.
> Need I go on – the whole world is lost in delusion:
> rare are they who recognize the Saints....
>
> Kabīr Sāhib and Tulsī Sāhib
> brought and spread the teachings of the Merciful *(Dayāl mat).*
> *Rādhā Swāmī* openly makes known: I, too, am one of them.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:3.1–5, 7–8, SBP pp.188–89*

> Take to the path of the soul and the Word *(surat Shabd mārg)*
> and go to *sat lok* (true region):
> All others are paths of *Kāl (Kāl mat).*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 24:1.111–12, SBP p.205*

kathrah (A), **kaśrat** (P) *Lit.* manyness, multiplicity; mystically, the multiplicity of creation arising from the oneness of God. *Aḥadīyah* is the oneness that excludes all *kathrah; waḥdānīyah* is the oneness that includes all *kathrah.*

See also: **aḥadīyah** (2.2), **waḥdānīyah** (2.2).

khaṭa', **khaṭī'ah** (A), **khaṭā'** (A/P), *Lit.* mistake, error, wrong, offence, lapse, omission; spiritually, a sin committed without intention, the mistakes of an ardent seeker; a general term which includes *dhanb* (a shortcoming) and *ithm* (an intentional sin). The *Qur'ān* uses the term in verb form:

Pray: Our Lord! Condemn us not
if we forget or fall into error *(khaṭa')*.
Qur'ān 2:286, HQSA

Sufis, like all other mystics, say that God's grace far outweighs man's errors. Shaykh Rūzbihān says:

> *Khaṭā'* is a lapse by those dwelling in Attributes who have a predominance of love, and where there is a danger of their taking the unreal to be the Real in their perception of divinity. Therefore, the perfect ones have said, "O God, if we have made a mistake or have been forgetful, forgive us and do not count it against us."[1] Through the sincerity of their steadfastness in love and realization, these lapses are eliminated.
>
> *Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ, MAR p.225, in FN13 pp.150–51*

As Rūmī says, addressing the Divine:

Your part, munificence:
my part, forgetfulness.
Your part, transmutation:
my part, error *(khaṭā')*.
Rūmī, Maśnavī V:781; cf. MJR6 p.49

See also: **dhanb**, **ithm**, **pāpa**, **sin (in early Christianity)**, **sin (in Judaism)**.

1. *Qur'ān* 2:286.

khayāl (A/P), **khiyāl** (P) (pl. A/P. *khayālāt*, P. *takhyīl'hā*) *Lit.* thought; one of the five faculties of the mind *(ḥawāss al-bāṭin)*; also, illusion, fantasy, fancy, imagination, idea, particularly in contrast to reality; hence, the material world, indicating its illusory nature. From the mystic point of view, that which is real or true *(ḥaqq)* is permanent and unchanging; that which is transitory and subject to change is illusion *(khayāl)*. Like many other Sufis, Ibn 'Arabī describes the entire world as illusory, existing in the mind alone, in imagination:

> The world is illusory *(mutawahham)*, it has no true existence; it is that which one means by imagination *(khayāl)*. That is to say that you imagine that it is an autonomous reality, separated from God and added on, whereas it is, in itself, nothing.
>
> *Ibn 'Arabī, Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, FH p.103; cf. WP p.64*

In Sufi terminology, the visible world *('ālam al-shahādah)* is a reflection of the world of patterns *('ālam al-mithāl)*, and the *'ālam al-mithāl* itself is a reflection of the world of spirits *('ālam al-arwāḥ)*. Rūmī says that all the realms of creation have their source in the vastness of the spiritual realm, the eternity of "Nonexistence" that lies beyond even the world of spirits. From eternity are fed the "fantasies" that make up the "realm of fantasies" – the *'ālam al-mithāl*. Likewise, the physical world of "existence" is "narrower" than the "realm of fantasy", while the gross sensory aspects of this world are "narrower still", like a "cramped prison":

O God, reveal to the soul
  that place where Speech *(Kalām)* is growing without words,
  that the pure soul may fly headlong
  towards the far-stretching expanse of Nonexistence –
An expanse very ample and spacious,
  and from it, this fantasy *(khayāl)* and being (of ours) is fed.

(The realm of) fantasies *(khayālāt)* is narrower than Nonexistence:
  on that account, fantasy *(khayāl)* is the cause of pain.
(The realm of actual) existence,
  is narrower still than (the realm of) fantasy *(khayāl)*:
Hence, in it, full moons become crescents.
Again, the existence of the world of sense and colour
  is narrower than this, for it is a cramped prison.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3092–97; cf. MJR2 pp.168–69, in SPL p.251

Rūmī also speaks of the illusion or "fancy" surrounding pseudo-spirituality. To wear the garb of a holy man, he says, and to think that purity is attained thereby, is pure "fancy":

The true *Ṣūfī* is he who has become a seeker of purity:
It is not from wearing the garment of wool
  and patching it....
With these base scoundrels, Sufism has become patching,
  ... and that is all.
To wear coloured garments with the fancy *(khayāl)*
  of attaining that purity and good name is commendable,
  but only if, with the fancy *(khayāl)* thereof,
  you go on till you attain to its essential principle;
Not like those who worship worldly fancies *(khayāl)* manifold.

Rūmī, Maśnavī V:363–66; cf. MJR6 p.24

He goes on to explain that it is a rare seeker who can see past the "fancy *(khayāl)*" to the reality:

> Fancy *(khayāl)* is the baton of (divine) jealousy,
> surrounding the curtained pavilion of (divine) Beauty:
> It bars every seeker, saying,
> "There is no admission":
> every fancy *(khayāl)* confronts him, saying "Stop!" –
> Except, indeed, that person of sharp hearing
> and keen intelligence who possesses enthusiasm
> drawn from the host of His assistance.
> He does not recoil from the fancies *(takhyīl'hā)*
> that bar the way, nor is he checked:
> He shows the King's token:
> then passage is granted.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:367–70; cf. MJR6 pp.24–25*

"Sharp hearing" alludes to hearing the inner Music, so frequently mentioned by Rūmī. "Keen intelligence" refers to the higher intelligence or expanded consciousness that experiences the spiritual reality.

See also: **illusion**, **khayāl** (5.1), **māyā**.

khel (H/Pu) *Lit.* a game; also, a play, a drama, a show; a passing episode on the stage of life; mystically, something false, illusory, passing, transient; hence, the world, the events of life, the creation:

> Thou art the river, and all is within Thee:
> besides Thee, there is no one else.
> All sentient beings are Thy playthings (*khel,* play).
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 11, MMS*

> Forever and aye Thou, O Lord, art but one:
> secondly, Thou hast set afoot the world play *(khel)*.
> Thou hast created self-conceit and arrogance,
> and infused avarice into the mortals.
> Do Thou keep me in the way as it pleases Thee:
> everyone does as Thou directest him.
> Some Thou attachest to the *Guru*'s instruction,
> grantest pardon and unitest with Thyself.
>
> *Guru Angad, Ādi Granth 139, MMS*

All this world play *(khel)* is set afoot by the Creator,
and God, the Creator, has installed might amongst all.
The one Lord's thread works in the world,
and when He pulls out the thread, the creation falls (dissolves),
and only the unique Personality (*Ekankār,* the One) remains.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 507, MMS

See also: **game**, **līlā**.

khvāb (P) *Lit.* sleep, dream; mystically, living in the material world with no perception of the higher and finer realms of the creation. Ordinary "sleep" at night, says Rūmī, is only a "second sleep *(khvāb-i duvum)*", an immersion into a yet deeper level of illusion:

Know, O comrade, that your sleep *(khvāb)*
and waking (in this world)
is as though a sleeper should dream
that he has gone to sleep *(khvāb).*
He thinks, "Now I am asleep,"
unaware that he is really in the second sleep *(khvāb-i duvum).*

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1736–37, MJR4 p.97

Being distracted by the world, the average person chooses the sleep of heedlessness *(khvāb-i ghaflah);* through neglect, he lapses into being awake to the material world and asleep to the spiritual reality:

Whosoever is awake (to the material world)
is the more asleep *(khvāb)* (to the spiritual world);
His wakefulness is worse than his sleep *(khvāb).*
When our soul is not awake to God,
wakefulness is like closing our doors (to the Divine).

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:409–10; cf. MJR2 p.25

"Wakefulness" to the world means being asleep to God. The inner door to His influence is effectively kept closed by the continuous outpouring of the mind's attention into the world of the senses. Generally, this sleep of heedlessness continues, without interruption, until the time of death. At that time, lamentations are both belated and futile:

Have you been asleep till now,
that only now you have rent your garments in mourning?

Then, O sleepers, mourn for yourselves,
for this heavy slumber *(khvāb-i girān)* is an evil death.

Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:795–96; cf. MJR6 p.302

But perhaps most foolish are the people who go through life enjoying what Rūmī calls the sleep of the hare *(khvāb-i khargūsh)*. According to folklore, the hare sleeps with one eye open; that is, he attempts to protect himself from predators by looking as if he were awake, when really he is asleep. The sleep of the hare refers to the person who studies the scriptures and has a theoretical knowledge of the spiritual realms. Perhaps he even expounds wisely on the same and gathers a following, but in fact he has no actual experience of the spiritual Reality. He looks as if he is awake, but really he is asleep. Rūmī depicts a lion roaring as he comes upon the hare who is fast asleep with one eye open. At this point in the story, the lion represents God, who sees through all pretence:

The lion shouted: "Ha, villain!
I who have torn oxen limb from limb,
I who have rubbed the ear of the ferocious elephant –
What is a halfwitted hare,
that he should thus disregard my behest?"
Abandon the hare's slumber *(khvāb-i khargūsh)*
and heedlessness!
Give ear, O donkey, to the roaring of this lion!

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1153–56, MJR2 p.64

Conversely, speaking of those who are engaged in mystic practice and are actually awake within in the higher spiritual realms, Rūmī turns the imagery of sleep around. He likens sleep to leaving the body in meditation. In neither sleep nor meditation is there any awareness of the body or the world. Yet one state is unconsciousness, the other superconsciousness:

At night prisoners are unconscious of their prison,
at night governors are unconscious of their power.
There is no sorrow, no thought of gain or loss,
no fancy of this person or that person.
This is the state of the *'ārif* (gnostic),
even without sleep *(bī-khvāb):*
God said, "You would think they were awake while they slept."

Shy not at this. He is asleep, day and night,
to the affairs of the world,
like a pen controlled by the hand of the Lord.

One who sees not the hand in the writing thinks
that the act proceeds from the pen by means of movement.
He (God) has shown forth some part of this state of the *'ārif,*
inasmuch as the vulgar too are overtaken
by the sleep of the senses.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:390–95; cf. MJR2 p.24

Rūmī is referring to the *Qur'ān* where it says of the Men of the Cave (mystics), "Thou wouldst have thought them awake." That is, they seem to be functioning in the world, living normal lives, "whilst they slept",[1] but in fact their individual selves have been annihilated *(fanā'),* and all their actions are really God's action; they are like a pen in His hand.

Again, Rūmī is using *khvāb* (sleep) in this same sense to refer to meditation and the inner mystic journey, when he says:

So long as you are engaged
in the conversation of wakefulness,
how will you catch any scent
of the conversation of sleep *(khvāb)?*
Our speech and action is the exterior journey:
the interior journey is above the sky.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:569–70; cf. MJR2 p.33

See also: **dream**, **jāgnā**, **sleep**.

1. *Qur'ān* 18:18.

kshar(a) (S/H) *Lit.* perishable, changeable; all that is perishable; hence, the material world including all objects, minds and bodies. In this world, only the imperishable soul *(ātman)* within each creature – human or otherwise – is eternal and unchanging. Everything else exists by virtue of its changeability – an expression of the vibration and movement within it, the diluted power of the Creative Word. As such, it is subject to constant change and dissolution. The *Bhagavad Gītā* contrasts the "perishable" and "Imperishable":

In the world, there are two types of being *(purush):*
the perishable *(kshara)* and the Imperishable *(Akshara).*
To the perishable *(kshara)* belong all manifested beings,
while the Imperishable *(Akshara)* remains aloof and unchanging.

Bhagavad Gītā 15:16

From the Saints' viewpoint, *kshar* refers to everything that has its origin within the worlds of the mind. Consequently, *akshar* is used in reference to the spiritual realms beyond the greater mind, which are free from the effects of constant change, though they are still subject to occasional dissolution and re-creation.

See also: **akshara** (2.1, 4.1).

lā (A/P) *Lit.* no, not, non-, without; equivalent to the English negative prefixes un-, in-, ir-, im- or the affix -less; mystically, either all that God is not, *i.e.* the creation; or, conversely, God Himself, as the Nonbeing who is the source of all being.

When *lā* is used for the physical creation, it implies that the soul is away from the reality and lost in the 'no-thing'. Thus, says Rūmī, Adam wept and wondered why he was "inscribed in the scroll of *lā*"[1] after being exiled from paradise – when he was excluded from the presence of God, and sent to the land of 'no reality'.

But Rūmī uses the term both ways. Souls, he says, are "particles of *lā*" – of 'Nonbeing'. Here, 'Nonbeing' means the 'Nonexistence' that is God, beyond the confines of existence in creation. But to experience this reality, he encourages the soul to come out from the "*lā* of negation" – the place of 'no true being' – meaning this world. Likewise, the divine Music which the Saints and prophets hear within themselves calls out to the soul to come out of the "*lā*" of this world:

> The prophets also have (spiritual) notes within,
> whence there comes life beyond price
> to them that seek.
> The sensual ear does not hear those notes,
> for the sensual ear is defiled by iniquities....
> The inward notes of the Saints say, at first:
> "O particles of *lā* (not, nonbeing),
> take heed, lift up your heads from the *lā* of negation,
> put forth your heads from this fancy and vain imagining."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:1919–20, 1925–26; cf. MJR2 pp.104–5*

The word also appears in the Muslim profession of faith, "*Lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no god but God)."[2] Commenting in a wordplay on this commonly repeated verse from the *Qur'ān,* Rūmī asks what is left when *lā* (the nonbeing of the ego) has been killed? Only *illā Allāh* (*lit.* except God) – only God Himself – is left when the ego is annihilated:

He (the lover) drives home the sword of not *(lā)*
in order to kill all other than God:
Thereupon consider what remains after not *(lā)*.
There remains "except God *(illā Allāh)*":
all the rest is gone.
Hail, O mighty love, destroyer of polytheism!
Rūmī, Maśnavī V:589–90, MJR6 p.38

See also: **lā-makān** (2.1), **lā-maqām** (2.1).

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:2856, *MJR4* p.160.
2. *e.g. Qur'ān* 2:255, 37:35.

labyrinth (Gk. *labyrinthos*) A maze-like network of tunnels, paths or chambers; in Greek mythology, a maze built for King Minos of Crete by the inventive genius, Daedalus, to contain the monstrous minotaur, which had the body of a man, the head of a bull, and was fed on human flesh. *Labyrinthos* is an apt description, used in the Greek version of the allegorical poem, the *Robe of Glory,* for the realm of birth and death, where the soul is easily lost in the illusions and temptations which lead to rebirth in a multitude of possible physical forms. As the soul says when it ascends from the body:

I passed by *Labyrinthos,*
and I left Babylon upon my left hand.
Robe of Glory 69, Acts of Thomas IX, ANT p.414

Nearly two millennia later, the same term is used in a letter from Mahārāj Charan Singh to a disciple:

As a rule, while we are reaping the results of previous *karmas* – whether the actions be good or bad – we create many more, and there is an unending series of births and deaths till we come across some Saint or *Mahātmā* who can guide us out of this labyrinth.
Mahārāj Charan Singh, Light on Sant Mat 92, LOSM p.164

lawlessness See **rebellion.**

līlā (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* play, display, spectacle, pageant, sport, pastime, diversion, amusement, fun, whim; free movement or motion, regular or irregular, like water in a fountain; ease or facility in doing something; a sportive display,

especially one characterized by its charm, beauty, elegance and loveliness; hence, mystically, the sportive display or cosmic dance of the Lord's love as experienced in His creation as an ever moving, dynamic manifestation of forces and energies. Hence, the *Brahma Sūtras* say, "Creation is simply sport *(līlā)* (to *Brahman*)."[1] And in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* the question is asked:

> Tell me, O learned sage, ... how, through His *māyā,*
> He (the Lord) manifests His play *(līlā).*
>
> *Bhāgavata Purāṇa 1:1.18, SBPS p.15*

And the *Padma Purāṇa* says that the Lord's *līlā* is both manifest and hidden:

> *Līlā* is of two kinds: manifest and unmanifest.
>
> *Padma Purāṇa; in "Līlā", SKD4 p.224*

The term *līlā* has been used by many Indian mystics to describe the creation as the play of the supreme Power, having no permanent reality. The intricate design and arrangement of the universe and its incomprehensible, wondrous and mysterious ways of precise and inviolable operation are said to be a grand display of the Lord's sportive will. However, it cannot be said that God who is all-fulfilled and complete in Himself has a need of His own to be fulfilled by the act of creation. The creation is therefore said to be a gracious act on His part, and to be a manifestation of His love, resulting from the overflowing of His bliss *(ānanda).* He is therefore able to rejoice in His own love by enabling the manifested creation to enjoy its sweetness. It is this play of the Lord's love which is called His *līlā.* This means that despite all the apparent suffering, the primary motive force behind the creation is that of love and bliss. This is difficult to understand:

> The luminous Lord abides in all the places:
> His wondrous play *(līlā)* can be realized not.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 897, MMS*

Speaking of the beauty and grace of this dance in *bhanwar guphā* (*lit.* rotating cave), the realm bordering eternity, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes of it as a marvellous *"līlā":*

> Arriving at the gates of *bhanwar guphā,*
> the true Master revealed the splendour of the mirrored palace.
> Marvellous is the beauteous spectacle *(līlā)* of this realm:
> each ray has the radiance of a sun.
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 9:9.15–16, SBP p.94*

Līlā is personified as the goddess *Lalita*, also called *Mahādevī*, whose form is considered to be that of the creation itself.

See also: **game**, **tamāshā**.

1. *Brahma Sūtras* 2:1.33.

madness Insanity, lunacy; the condition of one who is unable to see things the way they really are, everything being distorted by the way their mind is functioning; mystically, the state of worldliness of those who do not see Reality, but endlessly chase after phantoms and mirages which evaporate from their hands, and can never be grasped. The metaphor is common throughout spiritual literature, as in the *Sibylline Oracles*, of uncertain provenance and antiquity:

> You walk in pride and madness:
> Leaving the right and straight path,
>   you have wandered away through thorns and briars.
> Foolish mortals!
> Cease roaming in the darkness of night,
>   and lay hold on the light.
>
> *Sibylline Oracles, in Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen II; cf. OTP1 (1:23–27) p.470, WCA1 p.36*

Likewise, in a Manichaean psalm, the writer speaks of the "evil genius" and "madness" that binds souls to the "darkness" of this world:

> I wandered throughout the whole world,
>   I witnessed all the things that are in it.
> I saw that all men run vainly to and fro.
>
> O how great is the evil genius
>   and madness of the darkness,
>   wherein they have been bound!
> For they have forgotten God,
>   who came and gave Himself up to death for them.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLIV; cf. MPB p.51*

Here, the God who incarnates in the world of death is the Saviour or Master. Another of the Manichaean psalms says:

Since I was bound in the flesh I forgot my divinity.
I was made to drink the cup of madness,
  I was made to rebel against my own self.
The powers *(archons)* and principalities came within,
  they armed themselves against me.
My Lord Jesus, do not abandon me.

Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.117

The true "self" is the soul. But by sending the soul into the creation where it is distracted and deluded by the mind and the senses, it is "made to drink the cup of madness", turning away from the bliss and light of the pure soul to identify with the suffering and darkness of life in this world. The illusory ego of the mind usurps the place of the true "self" of the royal soul.

The "powers and principalities", the realms and rulers in the domain of the negative power, are encountered within by the captive soul and hold it bound: "They armed themselves against me."

The term is also used to mean the 'madness' or complete absorption of the soul in divine love.

See also: **drunkenness**, **fool**.

maghrib (A/P) *Lit.* west; hence, the sunset; the place of sunset, the place of darkness; also the fourth of the five Muslim times for set prayers, to be said at sunset; as a Sufi term, the place of spiritual darkness; either the material world or the physical body itself or the state of the soul in the body, as in the expression *maghrib al-shams* (*lit.* the sun in the west, the sun in the place of darkness), meaning the divinity or the spiritual radiance hidden within the human body.

Rūmī says that the five physical senses lead a soul to the *maghrib,* whereas the five *ḥawāss-i dil* (*lit.* senses of the heart, inner senses) lead to the "sunrise", the East, the place of spiritual light:

If you are an Alexander,
  come to the sun's rising place:
After that, wherever you go,
  you are possessed of goodly splendour.
After that, wherever you go,
  it will become the place of sunrise:
All the places of sunrise will be in love
  with your place of sunset *(maghrib).*
Your batlike senses are running towards the sunset *(maghrib);*

Your pearl-spangled (spiritual) senses
are faring towards the sunrise.

The way of (physical) sense perception
is the way of asses, O rider:
Have shame, O you who are jostling with asses!
Besides these five senses,
there are five other senses:
Those are like red gold,
while these senses are like copper.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:45–49; cf. MJR2 p.224

In Sufi imagery, the spirit is likened to a rider, and the lower, carnal mind *(nafs)* is depicted as an ass *(khar)*. When the physical senses take the lead, Rūmī describes the rider as dismounting and "jostling with asses". To mount the ass, however, is to come to the "sun's rising place", and to be "an Alexander", a conqueror whose journey of conquest took him further and further to the East. Then "your place of sunset" – your darkness – will be continually illumined by the ever existent light of spiritual sunrise.

mahāmāyā (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* great *(mahā)* illusion *(māyā);* the illusion which makes the material world appear as if it really exists; also, the personification of *māyā* as a female deity, also known as *Durgā* or *Shakti;* used synonymously in the *Ādi Granth* with *māyā* or *prakṛiti.*

See also: **māyā, Shakti** (4.2).

mammon The world, particularly riches or wealth, as in the famous saying of Jesus, according to the *King James Version* of Matthew:

Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:24, KJV

See also: **devils** (6.1).

ma'ṣiyah (A), **ma'ṣiyat** (P) (pl. *ma'āṣī*) *Lit.* disobedience, sinfulness, transgression. Ḥāfiẓ says that both transgression and piety originate in God's will:

Do not look upon drunken me
with the eye of degradation.

For there is no transgression *(ma'ṣiyat)* or piety
  that does not arise from His will.
Ḥāfiz, Dīvān, DHA p.222, DHM (478:6) p.429, DIH p.356, in SSE3 p.130

And Sarmad says:

Your mercy, O God, has outweighed my sins:
  that is the real reason for my great sinfulness *(ma'ṣiyat).*
Great though my sins, Your kindness is far greater
  than I have seen and experienced anywhere else.
Sarmad, Rubā'īyāt-i Sarmad 1; cf. RIS p.1

See also: **dhanb, khaṭa'**.

maṣnū' (A/P) *Lit.* made, created; that which is made or created; mystically, all that God has made; the creation. *Maṣnū'* (made) is contrasted with *ṣun'* (making), which refers to His ever sustaining and continuous act of making, the divine presence in all things. Mystics suggest that rather than being lost in the things God has made *(maṣnū'),* human beings should look to His making *(ṣun'),* His omnipresence. In all circumstances, the mystic sees only God's "making" in everything:

I am in love with Your making *(ṣun')*
  in thanksgiving and patience;
How should I be in love, like the infidel,
  with that which You have made *(maṣnū')?*
He that loves God's making *(ṣun')* is glorious;
He that loves what He has made *(maṣnū')* is an unbeliever.
Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1360–61; cf. MJR4 p.76

Similarly, mystics advise giving attention to the Creator *(Khāliq),* rather than to the creation *(khalq).*

ma-u mā (P) *Lit.* me *(man)* and we *(mā);* mystically, otherness and individuality; the state of separation from God. Mystics say that all appearances of otherness and individuality are really illusion. God is both the worshipper and the worshipped. As mystics have said in various ways, "He worships Himself through us":

You have contrived this 'I' and 'we' in order that
  You might play the game of worship with Yourself;

That all 'I's' and 'you's' should become one soul,
and at last should be submerged in the Beloved.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1787–88; cf. MJR2 p.98

māyā (S/H/Pu), **māiā** (Pu) *Lit.* supernatural power, magical power; illusion, unreality, delusion, deception, fraud, trick; magic, witchcraft; in Indian philosophy and mysticism, the veil of illusion; the illusion of sensory appearance; the illusion that veils perception of the divine Reality, projecting transience as real; the principle responsible for *vivarta* (*lit.* whirling about, *i.e.* illusion, delusion); all that which is not eternal, which is not real or true; hence, the phenomenal universe and all material appearances.

Though often associated specifically with the physical universe, *māyā* is essentially a power originating with the universal mind, and prevailing throughout the worlds of the mind. *Māyā* is often represented as a beautiful, but faithless, woman who lures mankind and keeps the soul tied to the realm of illusion.

This world is taken as reality by most of its inhabitants. However, the concept of reality is poorly understood. It is worth considering, for example, whether something that changes, and cannot be relied upon to remain the same indefinitely, can be considered real in an absolute sense. Similarly, can something be considered real if it promises to be one thing, but turns out to be another – if it has actually been a deception and an illusion? Things in this world are not eternal or unchanging, but possess only a relative reality. Just as a dream seems real when dreaming, but is revealed on waking to have been an illusion, so are this world and consciousness here realized to be illusory upon the awakening of higher consciousness.

Even from a scientific viewpoint, this world and its experiences are not what they seem. Matter appears to be solid and 'real', yet physicists say that it is actually comprised of tiny packets or 'particles' of energy, held together by the forces between them and spinning at incredible speeds. It is the speed, the mass, the forces between them, and the energies of these 'particles', together with the limitations of sensory perception, which give rise to the appearance of a stable, 'solid' physical universe. In fact, it is a constantly shifting and vibrating sea of energy, perceived only partially by the physical senses. This is just one small aspect of *māyā*.

Similarly, man has desires for things and achievements of the world which he thinks will bring happiness and fulfilment to his life. However, if he manages to attain them, he finds that they do not, after all, bring the expected peace of mind. In fact, they may bring even more worry and unhappiness. He was therefore led on and deceived by the appearance of things. This, too, is *māyā*.

In the astral and causal realms, as well as in the physical universe, *māyā* is all-pervasive. Here, *māyā* is deceptively beautiful and alluring, blissful and beguiling. And though a soul may earn the right to a prolonged stay in heaven through devoted spiritual practice or through good deeds on earth, sooner or later the right to dwell there is exhausted, and the soul is forced to return to the material plane. Consequently, the soul's stay in heaven was deceptive. Souls may even think they have reached the highest Divinity, when in fact they have only seen the lord of the astral or causal regions. This is also *māyā*.

The two fundamental aspects of this illusion are time and space. Many mystics have pointed out that time is not real. It is a creation of mind and *māyā*. And since, in this world, souls live entirely enveloped by time and space, the entire fabric of the world is also illusory. Everything in this world lies within the orbit of time and appears to be governed by it. No moment has any reality except the present, for that which is past cannot be regarded as real, nor that which is yet to happen.

Wherever there is mind, there is *māyā*, for the mind is the divider of the One into the multiplicity and diversity of the lower realms of creation. Taking this ever shifting manyness as reality is the illusion cast by *māyā* over everything within these realms. Souls who live in the worlds of the mind, therefore, live in a domain of illusion which they take to be real. This is all the work of mind and *māyā*.

Although there is some scholarly difference of opinion, the meaning of *māyā*, like many terms in Indian philosophy, has probably developed from earlier times. In the *Ṛig Veda*, *māyā* is used to indicate the supernatural or magical power attributed to the gods, especially *Varuṇa*, *Mitra* and *Indra*. It is praised as a world-sustaining power. In the sense of deception and cunning, it is the special skill of the *asuras* (demons). It also means the power of transformation and the ability to assume strange forms, though in this sense it is little different from the *māyā* of later times:

> Of every form, he *(Indra)* is the pattern:
> his is the only form to be regarded.
> *Indra*, through *māyā* (illusion), assumes many forms.
>
> *Ṛig Veda 6:47.18*

And:

> (O *Indra*), all your battles of which men tell
> were but illusion *(māyā)*.
> For you have never had an enemy,
> neither today nor in former times.
>
> *Ṛig Veda 10:54.2*

It is in these senses that *māyā* also appears in the Hindu epics. Megnātha, in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* and Ghatotkacha in the *Mahābhārata* use magical powers *(māyā)* in their fights.

It is in the *Upanishads* that *māyā* moves definitively out of the realm of the mythological into the sphere of the philosophical and metaphysical, and is described more or less as it is presently understood in Indian mysticism. The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad,* for example, asserts:

> The creator of *māyā* projects the universe,
> and by means of *māyā,* becomes entangled in it
> as a separate entity (*i.e.* the *jīva,* the imprisoned soul).
> Know *prakṛiti* to be *māyā,*
> and the great Lord to be the master of *māyā.*
> The entire universe is filled with those things
> that are parts of His being.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 4:9–10*

Prakṛiti, here also identified with *māyā,* is the subtle pattern or essence underlying all forms in the creation below *Brahman.* To attain mystic knowledge of *Brahman,* the soul has to pierce the veil of *māyā.* Hence, the same writer continues:

> May the one Lord, who, by the power of His *māyā,*
> covered Himself like a spider
> with threads of primal matter *(pradhāna)* –
> Grant union with *Brahman!*
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:10*

Māyā is being depicted as the means by which souls are held captive in the creation. Hence, in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* Kṛishṇa says:

> O Arjuna! The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings,
> revolving them all by the mystery of *māyā,*
> as if turning on a wheel.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 18:61; cf. BGT*

And he also says that devotion to God is the means of escape:

> My divine *māyā,* constituted of the three *guṇas,*
> is difficult to overcome.
> They who take refuge in me alone,
> only they overcome *māyā.*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 7:14; cf. BGT*

Later Indian philosophers and mystics have understood *māyā* in this manner, although the different philosophical schools have elaborated differently on the essential theme. The ninth-century Shankara, for example, often uses *māyā*, *avidyā* (spiritual ignorance) and *ajñāna* (lack of spiritual knowledge) synonymously, when speaking of *māyā* as it affects the individual. But Shankara also speaks of *māyā* as the underlying cosmic force or principle by which the creation has come into existence. The *Tantras*, on the other hand, call this creative force *shakti* (energy or power), considering the universe of mind and matter to be the play of *shakti*. To some schools of Indian philosophy this *shakti* is real and eternally coexistent with *Brahman*.

According to *Advaita Vedānta*, *Brahman* is real or true and the world is false or unreal. Hence, the world is often described as *māyā* (illusion). But this illusion is not to be confused with delusion. In delusion, there is nothing there. In an illusion, something is present, but it is mistaken for something else. Shankara uses the example of a man who mistakes a rope for a snake, and reacts accordingly.[1] For the man, the rope does exist. It is just that he mistakes it for something else. Nevertheless, Vedantists also say that from the viewpoint of *Brahman*, *māyā* does not exist. For one who is merged into *Brahman*, there is only *Brahman* and nothing else.

The viewpoints of the various schools of philosophy, however, are essentially intellectual developments. Discussions and intellectual points of view are one thing; *māyā* is another. In fact, *Advaita* Vedantist, Swāmī Nikhilānanda, points out that the differences of description and opinion are themselves the products of *māyā*:

> As the (human) mind itself is a product of *māyā*, one cannot, through reasoning, know the cause of *māyā*. It is *māyā*, ignorance, that produces the illusion of *desha*, *kāla* and *nimitta* – space, time and causality – which hides the true nature of pure consciousness and projects the multiple universe. Or, according to a higher Vedantic concept, *māyā* through its *nāma* and *rūpa* – names and forms – manifests the multiple objects of the relative world. *Brahman*, stamped, as it were, by names and forms, appears as the multiple objects (of creation).
>
> *Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.51–52*

Putting the matter more simply, but more expansively, he also says:

> On account of *māyā*, or ignorance, man has forgotten his true nature and finds himself entangled in the relative world of good and evil, pain and pleasure, life and death, and the other pairs of opposites. From the cradle to the grave, the unillumined soul engages in ceaseless action, striving to shun evil and realize the good. But his activities are influenced by love and hate, attachment and aversion, and he

hopes to experience, through action, infinite and eternal happiness in the outside world. He roams aimlessly in *saṃsāra,* the world of change and becoming, rising or falling according to the results of his action. Only gradually does he discover the impossibility of attaining abiding happiness through work associated with I-consciousness and the desire for results....

Our daily practical life in the dual world is not possible without *māyā.* We all live, move and think in *māyā.* Inexplicable in the extreme, *māyā* is described as *"aghatana-ghatana-paṭīyasī"* – making the impossible, possible. Under its spell even an incarnation *(avatār)* of God appears to forget his superhuman resplendence, and behaves like an ordinary mortal.

Māyā is responsible for the contradictions in our thinking and actions. Good is inevitably followed by evil, and yet we work to create only good, believing that it will ultimately eliminate evil in this relative world. We believe in the progressive evolution of the universe. This is *māyā.* The cause determines the effect; yet we seek to accomplish good ends by bad means, we seek to establish peace through war. This is *māyā.* A man robs his fellow men and then gives away his wealth in philanthropy, expecting eternal happiness hereafter. Attachment, without which no happiness is possible on earth, creates bondage and brings suffering to both lover and beloved. This is all *māyā.* Money creates leisure and builds up culture, and in the end emasculates a nation, and brings about its ruin. The performance of duty elevates a man above the animals, and also obstructs his ultimate freedom. We want to conquer nature through material resources, and in the end we only become slaves of matter. This is *māyā.*

As long as we identify ourselves with the relative world, this *māyā* or contradiction broods over our every action and thought. There is no freedom in *māyā.* Freedom lies beyond.... Souls laden with the burden of relative experience, and weary with journeying hither and thither in the world of ignorance, discover that there is no ultimate happiness in *māyā,* in desiring of desires or in their fulfilment. Then they seek *Brahman,* the Lord of *māyā,* who is the embodiment of freedom and peace. The Lord says in the *Bhagavad Gītā:* "Those who take shelter in me ultimately go beyond *māyā.*" The light of *Brahman* destroys *māyā* as the light of the sun destroys the gloom of night.

It is often contended that the doctrine of *māyā,* which denies the reality of good and evil, is inconsistent with ethics; one can take shelter under *māyā* and trample underfoot all moral values. This is a distortion of the concept of *māyā.* As long as a man remains under the spell of *māyā,* good and evil are real to him. As long as one sees a

distinction between good and evil, one must shun the evil and follow the good. Shankara admits the reality of the relative world during the state of ignorance, and stresses the fact that, in that state, both good and evil should be treated as real. Therefore, ethical laws must be obeyed. They form the foundation of the Vedantic discipline. Only by pursuing the good and shunning the evil can one ultimately go beyond the illusion of the pairs of opposites. Likewise, social service, worship, prayer, and the performance of various duties in the world are not in conflict with man's longing to rid himself of *māyā* and attain freedom.

Swāmī Nikhilānanda, Introduction to Ātmabodha, SKS pp.viii–ix, 54–56

Swāmī Nikhilānanda is speaking from the traditional Indian yogic and *Advaita* Vedantic point of view. Indian Saints, writing for simple, unlettered people, have expressed themselves in even simpler language. Paltū, for example, describes the pervasive presence of *māyā* in the world. No soul escapes, he says, and he mentions human imperfections, the three *guṇas* (fundamental characteristics of diversity), spiritual ignorance and *karma* as aspects of *māyā* which keep souls tied to the "grinding wheels of *māyā*":

The grinding wheels of *māyā* turn,
  crushing the world to pulp.
Crushing the world to pulp,
  there is no escape,
  however you may try to get out.
Between the two grinding stones of the hand mill of *māyā*,
  not a single creature survives.
The wheel is being worked by her five minions –
  lust, anger, attachment, pride and avarice.
The three *guṇas* pour handfuls of grain into the mill.
The flour is kneaded by ignorance,
  and baked into a bread in the heated oven of *karma*.
Desire is the harlot
  who has ruined home after home;
And great is the power of *Kāl*,
  who makes a morsel of all.
"Listen," says Paltū, "none can escape being crushed
  without love and devotion for the Lord."
For the grinding wheels of *māyā* turn,
  crushing the world to pulp.

Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 185, PSB1 p.78

Māyā, he intimates, is the associate of *Kāl*, "who makes a morsel of all".

Kāl here is the negative power, the administrator of the worlds of the mind, of which *māyā* is an integral aspect.

Guru Amardās says that *māyā* pervades the creation. It is the source of pain, pleasure and ego, and is eradicated by the divine Word *(Shabd):*

> *Māyā* is pervading the three worlds,
> and is greatly clinging to the mortals.
> Without the *Guru,* emancipation (*mukat,* liberation) is not gained,
> nor do double mindedness (*dubidhā,* duality) and *māyā* depart.
> Whom do men call *māyā?*
> What work does *māyā* do?
> In woe and weal, has *māyā* enchained this mortal,
> and caused him to go about his business in ego.
> Without divine Word *(Shabd),* doubt is not dispelled,
> nor does pride depart from within.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 67, MMS*

See also: **Error**, **illusion**, **illusion (in Taoism)**.

1. Shankara, *Ātmabodha* 27.

mèng huàn (mèng huàn) (C) *Lit.* dreamlike *(mèng)* illusion *(huàn);* a Taoist term expressing a fundamental Taoist doctrine that the physical world as experienced through the senses does not represent the true reality of things, but is more like an illusion or a dream.

See also: **dream**, **illusion (in Taoism)**.

mithyā (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* falsehood, deception, untruth, illusion, misconception, unreal knowledge; also, as an adjective, false, illusory, incorrect, untrue, deceitful, wrong, unjust, sham, counterfeit, vain, fruitless, transitory; also, as an adverb, falsely, deceptively and so on. A number of mystics have equated *mithyā* with the power of illusion known as *māyā.* ʻInāyat Khān writes:

> In Hindu philosophy, … life in the world is an illusion, and therefore every experience and knowledge of this life is also illusion. The Sanskrit word for this illusion is *māyā;* it is also called *mithyā*.… When the soul begins to see the truth, it is, as it were, born again; and to this soul, all that appears truth to an average person, appears false; while what seems important and precious in life to that average

person has no value or importance for this soul; and what seems to this soul important and valuable, has no importance or value for the average person.

'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.224

Shankara also says:

Brahman alone is real; the world is unreal *(mithyā):*
the individual soul *(jīva)* is not different from *Brahman.*
Shankara, Brahmajñānāvalīmālā 5:21; cf. in SHI p.282, in VSY p.48 (n.3)

Guru Rāmdās also speaks plainly:

As many as are the kings, emperors, nobles, lords and chiefs,
deem them all as perishable, false *(mithyā),*
and engrossed in duality.
The eternal Lord is ever stable and immovable:
by meditating on Him, O my soul (*man,* mind), thou shalt be approved.
Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 861, MMS

See also: **māyā**.

muḥdath (A), **muḥdaṡ** (P) *Lit.* that which is artificial, unreal, non-eternal, transitory, phenomenal; that which has been created; hence, the creation, as opposed to *qadīm,* that which always exists: God.

nescience Spiritual ignorance. See **spiritual ignorance**.

net(s) An open mesh of string, wire and so on, used for a variety of purposes including the trapping of fish, birds and animals; mystically, the nets, snares or traps of the negative power or the devil, as in one of the Manichaean psalms where it is said of Jesus:

He burst … their nets that were spread,
he let the fish out to their sea.
Psalms of Thomas I, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.205

"Their sea" is the sea or ocean of God to which the fish or souls return. The expression is also used by Jesus in an analogy of human existence:

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net,
that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:
Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down,
and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

So shall it be at the end of the world:
the angels shall come forth,
and sever the wicked from among the just,
and shall cast them into the furnace of fire:
There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:47–50, KJV

Traditionally, the saying is taken to mean the separation of Christians from others at the end of the world. However, the compiler of Matthew's gospel, like Paul and others at that time, had his own beliefs concerning the imminent end of the world, and some of the sayings of Jesus are likely to have been adjusted accordingly. Bearing this in mind, there is an alternative and more universal interpretation of the saying.

Human life, says Jesus, is like a "net" that is "cast into the sea". When it is pulled out, it contains all manner of things, some of value, some not. Similarly, at the end of a person's life, there will be an accounting. Those who have made good use of human life by seeking God are divided from those who have done no more than get involved in the play of life, constantly seeking their own advantage and pleasure. They are cast "into the furnace of fire" – they return to the burning agony of this world where there is constant strife and worry, "wailing and gnashing of teeth". They will take birth in another body, not necessarily human, where their desires and the fruit of their actions can be best accommodated.

Indian mystics have also used the metaphor of a net to describe the entanglements of this world. Dariyā Sāhib writes:

Souls are like fish in the water
of the ocean of this world,
and the intense delusion of the world is truly the net.
Wherever one runs for safety in the three worlds (of creation),
Kāl catches him and smashes his head.
Souls are made to enter the womb and be born repeatedly
in the eight million, four hundred thousand forms of species.
Having forgotten their true Beloved,
the souls remain lost in the world.

Dariyā Sāhib, Sahasrānī, DSS p.45; cf. DSSB p.118

And:

The fisherman *(Kāl)* has cast his net
and caught the fish (souls).
He then eats them as his food.
This terrible net is cast in the three worlds;
Only a rare few can recognize
this imperceptible *Kāl*.

Dariyā Sāhib, Brahm Vivek, Chaupaī 170–71 DG2 p.344; cf. DSSB p.119

Alluding to the Christian metaphor of the Saviour as a fisher of souls, the creative Power is also called a Net.

See also: **fish** (6.3), **jagat jāl**, **jāl**, **jañjāl**, **Net** (3.1).

nidrā (S/H), **nīnd** (H/Pu) *Lit.* sleep; metaphorically, man's condition in this world.

See **sleep**.

nomad See **stranger**.

nut, **nut orchard** An extension of the 'valley' as a metaphor for this world. The expression occurs in the *Song of Songs* when the Beloved (the Master) says that he came down into this world to see which souls were "sprouting" or awakening spiritually:

I went down into the nut orchard,
to see what was sprouting in the valley.

Song of Songs 6:11, JB

The medieval *Zohar* points out that the nut, with its shell, inner membrane and kernel, is a symbol of God, the soul and the creation:

The entire creation, upper and lower, is organized on this principle, from the primal mystic Centre to the very outermost of all layers (this world). All are coverings, the one to the other, kernel within kernel, spirit inside of spirit (essence within essence), shell within shell.

The primal Centre is the innermost Light of a translucence, subtlety and purity beyond comprehension. That inner Point emanates from Itself, manifesting a 'palace' (*i.e.* spiritual realms or regions around the King and His Throne), which acts as an enclosure for the Centre, and is also of a radiance, brilliant beyond the power to know it.

> This 'palace' (garment) around the incognizable inner Point, while it is also an unknowable radiance in itself, is nevertheless of a lesser subtlety and brilliance than the primal Point. The 'palace' then emanates into a garment for itself.... From thence outward, there is emanation upon emanation, each constituting a garment to the one before, just as a shell surrounds the kernel. But though emanated first as a shell, each then becomes the kernel for the next emanation.
>
> *Zohar 1:19b–20a; cf. WZ2 p.495, ZBS p.28*

In the same way, the soul and mind are encased in the human form:

> Everything here below is fashioned according to this pattern; thus mortal man in this world is made according to this design: kernel and shell, spirit and body, and all is for the well-ordering of the world.
>
> *Zohar 1:20a; cf. WZ2 pp.495–96, ZBS p.29*

A soul encased in the human form is like a many-layered nut. The kernel, which in the walnut and others like it even resembles the brain, is surrounded by a shell, just as the soul in human form is surrounded by mind and body.

See also: **valley**.

oblivion The state of being mentally unaware; mystically, forgetfulness of the real self, the real home of the soul, the real purpose of human life, and most of all – which includes all of these – of God. The term is used, for instance, in the Manichaean psalms:

> You (Jesus) are the Paraclete whom I have loved since my youth:
> your light shines forth in me like the lamp of light:
> You have driven away from me the oblivion of Error:
> you have taught me to bless God and His lights.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVIII; cf. MPB p.56*

And, addressing the souls of this world:

> The Light has shone forth for you,
> O you that sleep in hell –
> the knowledge of the Paraclete, the ray of light;
> Drink the Water of Memory, cast away oblivion.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVIII; cf. MPB p.57*

See also: **forgetfulness**.

ocean A large expanse of sea; mystically, either the ocean of love and being or consciousness which is God; or the ocean of this world – a turbulent and stormy immensity which few can cross in safety.

See also: **baḥr** (2.1), **bhai jal**, **bhai sāgar**, **bhav jal**, **bhav sāgar**, **daryā** (2.1), **storm**.

pāp(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* evil, sin, vice, crime, wickedness, transgression, guilt, immorality; any transgression or violation of moral or spiritual law. Not only are universally condemned actions like murder, rape, adultery and theft regarded as sins, but all actions and thoughts arising from human imperfection are considered by mystics to be sins. Thus, sexual desire *(kām)*, anger *(krodh)*, greed *(lobh)*, attachment *(moh)* and pride or egotism *(ahankār)* are sins in themselves as well as being the source of sinful action. Hatred, envy, jealousy, slander, gluttony, fear, impatience, self-righteousness, spiritual ignorance, the inability to discriminate between the real and the unreal, and a host of other human imperfections also come in the same category.

Although human conscience provides a reasonable guide to what is bad or 'sinful', there is more than just a moral basis to sin. Mystics say that all thoughts and actions arising from anything other than the purest and most selfless of motivations leave impressions on the mind which have to be accounted for in future births. To clear this *karma*, the soul has to be reborn, undergoing experiences both pleasant and unpleasant. All religious literature warns 'sinners' of the consequences of misconduct, but often the extent of the problem is not understood.

Saints, seeing the entire human show from a higher level, have always described things in forthright language. This is not out of any sense of moral superiority, but rather out of compassion when they see the direction in which human beings are heading. Buddha therefore advised in characteristically simple language:

> Be brisk in doing good,
> control your thoughts from evil *(pāpa)*;
> For the mind *(man)* of he who is slack in doing good,
> rejoices in evil *(pāpa)*.
>
> Should a person commit sin *(pāpa)*
> let him not repeat it again and again;

He should find no pleasure in it,
for the result of evil *(pāpa)* conduct is suffering *(dukkha).*

Should a person do what is good,
let him repeat it again and again;
He should find pleasure in it,
for the result of good conduct is happiness *(sukha).*

Even an evildoer experiences good,
while his evil *(pāpa)* bears no fruit;
But when the evil *(pāpa)* bears fruit,
then the evildoer experiences evil results.

Even a good man experiences evil *(pāpa),*
while his good bears no fruit;
But when the good bears fruit,
then the good person experiences good results.

Do not think lightly of evil *(pāpa):*
saying, "it will not touch me":
Even a water pot is filled
by the steady falling of drops.
A fool *(bāla)* becomes filled with evil *(pāpa),*
even if gathered little by little.

Do not think lightly of good:
saying, "it will not touch me":
Even a water pot is filled
by the steady falling of drops.
A wise man becomes filled with goodness,
even if gathered little by little.

As a merchant with a small escort and great wealth
avoids a dangerous route;
As a person who loves his life avoids poison,
even so, should you avoid evil actions.

If there be no wound on your hand,
you may touch poison with it:
Poison does no harm to one with no wound:
no evil befalls him who does no evil *(pāpa).*

Dhammapada 9:1–9

Likewise, two millennia later, speaking of those who commit sin, Guru Arjun writes:

> They who commit sins *(pāp)* are assuredly plundered:
>   Azrael, the myrmidon of death, seizes and tortures them to death.
> They are cast into hell by the Creator,
>   and *Dharam Rāi* calls them to account.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1019–20, MMS*

And Guru Amardās says:

> She who understands not the significance of virtue and sin *(pāp)*,
>   and is attached with duality, is lost in illusion.
> The ignorant blind man knows not the right path,
>   and comes and goes, again and again (in birth and death).
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 110, MMS*

Human life is not simply a question of trying to avoid sin. Since the mind is imperfect and is constantly active, it is impossible to avoid sin. Human life is a battle which is intended to be fought, and cannot be avoided. This is one of the primary themes in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* which takes its setting on the battle field as an allegory of human existence. Speaking of life as a "holy war", Kṛishṇa says that any true human being should welcome the opportunity for spiritual progress. Even refusing to fight in this war, he says, is to "incur sin *(pāpa)*":

> O Arjuna! That *kshatriya* (warrior) should be a happy man
>   who gets the chance of a battle such as this:
> It is an open gate to heaven *(svarga).*
>
> If you take no part in this holy war,
>   you will incur sin *(pāpa);*
> Besides which you will be failing in your duty,
>   and will forfeit your reputation.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:32–33; cf. BGT*

There are two reasons why failure to take part in the spiritual battle results in sin. Firstly, because a mind that is not directed to God will automatically be directed towards the world. Secondly, because – in the divine scheme of things – human life is intended as a means towards God-realization, it is a sin, if not a crime, for a human being to turn his back on God. Therefore, Kṛishṇa, as God incarnate, advises: put all your trust in "me", and "I will free you from all sin *(pāpa)*":

> Giving up all reliance on religious practices *(dharma)*,
> come to me as your only refuge.
> Do not worry, I will free you from all sin *(pāpa)*.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 18:66; cf. BGT*

See also: **karma** (6.3), **khaṭa'**, **sin and evil**, **sin (in early Christianity)**, **sin (in Judaism)**.

paralysis Impairment or loss of muscle or sensory function in some part of the body. Spiritually, the soul in this world is said to be paralysed in the sense that its inherent inclination to seek God has been smothered, suppressed or paralysed by its burden of sins or *karma*. Its will to act for its own spiritual betterment has been paralysed.

Paralysis or being "sick of the palsy"[1] is one of the conditions said to have been healed by Jesus in the Christian gospels. Gnostic and later Manichaeans of the period, however, commonly interpreted Jesus' miracles as being of a spiritual nature. As the poet of the early Christian *Odes of Solomon* says, speaking of the Saviours:

> (They) have awakened the will that was paralysed.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 6:14*

Within the same family of healing metaphors, the Saviour was also known as the Physician or the "healer of sick souls".[2]

See also: **blindness**, **deafness**, **disease**, **dumbness**, **Physician** (▸2), **wounds**.

1. *Mark* 2:3; *Luke* 5:18*ff.*; *Matthew* 4:24, 8:26, 9:2*ff.*
2. *Acts of Thomas* I, *AAA* p.153.

piṇḍī māyā (H/Pu) *Lit.* physical *(piṇḍī) māyā* (illusion); that aspect of *māyā* which operates in *piṇḍa*; *māyā* as experienced in the physical body, and in the physical and material universe, including both its gross and subtle aspects.

prostitute A woman who takes money for sexual favours; metaphorically, the state of the soul in this creation, in the sense that the soul came into the creation as a pure soul, but by profligately giving her love to the people and

things of the world, she has become like a prostitute. This imagery is the basis of an allegory related in the *Expository Treatise on the Soul,* one of the gnostic tractates in the Nag Hammadi library:

> As long as she (the soul) was alone with the Father, she was virginal.... But when she fell down into a body and came to this life, then she fell into the hands of many robbers. And the wanton creatures passed her from one to another and dishonoured her. Some made use of her by force, while others did so by seducing her with a gift. In short, they defiled her, and she [surrendered her] virginity.
>
> And in her body she prostituted herself and gave herself to one and all, considering each one she was about to embrace to be her husband. When she had given herself to wanton, unfaithful adulterers, so that they might make use of her, then she sighed deeply and repented. But even when she turns her face from those adulterers, she runs to others and they compel her to live with them, and render service to them upon their bed, as if they were her masters. Out of shame, she no longer dares to leave them, whereas they deceive her for a long time, pretending to be faithful true husbands, as if they greatly respected her. And after all this, they abandon her and go....
>
> But when the Father who is above visits her and looks down upon her and sees her sighing – with her sufferings and disgrace – and repenting of the prostitution in which she engaged, and when she begins to call upon [His Name] so that He might help her, [imploring Him with] all her heart, saying, "Save me, my Father, for behold I will render an account [to Thee, for I abandoned] my house (spiritual home) and fled from my maiden's quarters. Restore me to Thyself again." When He sees her in such a state, then He will count her worthy of His mercy upon her, for many are the afflictions that have come upon her because she abandoned her house.
>
> *Expository Treatise on the Soul 127–29; cf. NHS21 pp.144–47*

The allegory continues with the soul's repentance and longing to return home, and the Father's sending of the true Bridegroom (the Saviour) to the soul, resulting in the soul's eventual return to purity.

The metaphor appears in the Bible, where the children of Israel, seeming to symbolize the soul in some instances, stray from the worship of the one God and turn to idols. The prophets remonstrate with them and liken them to harlots – unfaithful wives who have relations with many men:

> Let us have no rejoicing, Israel.
> no exulting like the other peoples;

For you have deserted God to play the whore,
you have enjoyed the prostitute's pay
on every threshing floor.

Hosea 9:1, JB

Their deeds do not allow them to return to their God:
Since a prostituting spirit possesses them,
they do not know *Yahweh*.

Hosea 5:4, JB

See also: **publicans and harlots**, **repentance** (▸2), **sin and evil**, **sinners**.

publicans and harlots, publicans and sinners Expressions used in the synoptic gospels to symbolize the sinners or people of this world, particularly those who know that they are sinful as opposed to the self-righteous who are unaware of their condition.

The word 'publican' comes from the Latin *publicanus* (tax collector), which is derived from *publicum* (*lit.* from the people, *i.e.* state revenues). Publicans were the collectors of various taxes levied upon the people by the Romans, where there was no doubt ample room for bribery and corruption. Harlots are an ancient symbol of sin and corruption. The association of tax collectors with prostitutes presumably represents the resentment felt by people of all times against taxation.

Said to be speaking to the "chief priests and the elders of the people", Jesus relates the parable of a man who had two sons. One says that he will go and work for his father – but does not. The other refuses at first, but later he does so. Jesus then concludes:

"Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" They say unto him, "the first".

Jesus saith unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

Matthew 21:31–32, KJV

His meaning is that the priests make a show of worshipping God, but they do not really do so – otherwise they would have followed John the Baptist. The sinners – "the publicans and the harlots" – on the other hand did not believe John the Baptist to begin with, but when they had had time to consider the matter, they did believe in him, and then they followed him in all sincerity.

In a number of places, it is emphasized that Jesus is said to have sat down to eat with "publicans and sinners",[1] signifying that the Masters come to this world to collect sinners, those who know they are in need of mercy and forgiveness, rather than those who self-righteously feel that they are not in need of any spiritual help.

The 'sinner' is usually one who has passion, feeling and emotion. Mystics can reach into the heart of such people because they are interested in experience – although they may be misguided in their search for it. But self-righteous and vain people are often so encased in a shell of superiority and scepticism that they never try out anything for themselves. Living in a cocoon of intellect, thoughts and fixed beliefs, they will rarely even listen to what a mystic has to say.

See also: **prostitute, repentance** (▸2), **sinners, tax collectors** (6.3).

1. *Mark* 2:15–16; *Matthew* 9:10–11, 11:19; *Luke* 5:30, 7:34, 15:1.

qahr (A/P) *Lit.* wrath; the antithesis of *luṭf*, mercy or grace. In Islam, God is said to have two aspects, *jalāl* (wrathful and majestic) and *jamāl* (beautiful and merciful). His 'wrath' is expressed in the separation of the creation from Himself, in particular in the suffering and mayhem of the physical universe.

Rūmī says that it is easy to distinguish the two, but only a mystic, a "man of God", can discern the "mercy" which is latent in "wrath", and *vice versa:*

> Everyone can distinguish mercy *(luṭf)* from wrath *(qahr)*,
> whether he be wise or ignorant or vile.
> But a mercy *(luṭf)* that has become hidden in wrath *(qahr)*,
> or a wrath *(qahr)* that has sunk into the heart of mercy *(luṭf)* –
> No one knows this except a man of God
> in whose heart is a spiritual touchstone.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1506–8; cf. MJR4 pp.84–85*

Rūmī also depicts these two aspects of God as a "sea", one half of which is "sweet like sugar", the other half, "bitter". In physical existence, these two seas conflict with each other, but their true origin is "not visible to (human) sight":

> One half of the sea is sweet like sugar:
> the taste sweet, the colour bright as the moon.
> The other half is bitter as snake's venom:
> the taste bitter and the colour dark as pitch.
> Both dash against one another,

from beneath and from the top,
wave on wave like the water of the sea.
The appearance of collision … is due
to the spirits' being intermingled in peace or war.

The waves of peace dash against each other,
and root up hatreds from men's breasts.
In other forms do the waves of war
turn men's loves upside down.
Love is drawing the bitter ones to the sweet,
because the foundation of all loves is righteousness.
Wrath *(qahr)* is carrying away the sweet ones to bitterness:
How should the bitter consort with the sweet?
The bitter and the sweet are not visible to (human) sight,
but they can be seen when viewed from the ultimate destination.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2574–82; cf. MJR2 p.140

See also: **jalāl** (2.1).

qatām (A/P) *Lit.* darkness, gloom; mystically, this world.

See also: **darkness**.

rebellion, rebellious powers Rebellion is the opposition or resistance to some authority, or the dissent from some moral or social code of behaviour. Mystically, rebellion implies inwardly turning away from God; permitting the mind to become involved in worldliness; being 'outside' the Law or Word, hence the synonym, lawlessness. Rebellion is the converse of repentance – the turning towards God. The expression is part of a family of metaphors drawn from the human judicial and punitive system which includes the Law (the Word), prison (this world, the body), captives (incarnated souls) and so on.

The metaphor may have originated with the rebellion and complaining of the Israelites against both Moses and *Yahweh* after their escape from Egypt. In the *Psalms,* and among the biblical prophets, especially Ezekiel and Isaiah, railing at the Israelites' rebellion against *Yahweh* is a common theme. Sometimes, it refers to the Israelites turning to other gods, or turning their back on their own religion in favour of worldly life. But there are places when the Israelites seem to symbolize the souls of this world, where rebellion against *Yahweh* is a general way of describing sin and worldliness.

Ezekiel writes:

> The word of *Yahweh* was addressed to me as follows, "Son of man, you are living with that set of rebels who have eyes and never see, ears and never hear, for they are a set of rebels."
>
> *Ezekiel 12:1–3, JB*

Having eyes and ears but failing to see and hear are common mystic metaphors for spiritual blindness and deafness. Here, they are the natural outcome of rebellion against God. In the story which follows Ezekiel's observation, the prophet makes an example of himself by going into voluntary exile in protest against the people's behaviour.

A passage from the psalms is more explicitly spiritual in meaning. God, says the psalmist, takes the spiritually bereft and captive souls of this world back to their eternal home with Himself. But "rebels" who turn their back on Him must stay in the desert of this world:

> Father of orphans, defender of widows:
> such is God in his holy dwelling;
> God gives the lonely a permanent home,
> makes prisoners happy by setting them free;
> But rebels must live in an arid land.
>
> *Psalm 68:5–6, JB*

Later mystics certainly used the imagery of rebellion to mean the mental and spiritual turning away from God. A Manichaean psalmist, for example, mixing both legal and healing metaphors, requests the divine Physician or Master:

> Heal me of the grievous wound of lawlessness.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.152*

Since the soul turns away from God under the influence of the negative power, the gnostics and Manichaean writers often described the rulers or *archons* of his realms as the "rebellious powers". These *archons* were also understood to have been created by the Demiurge, the creator-god who 'rebelliously' formed this world and other more subtle realms as "*aeon* copies" of the more truly spiritual regions.[1] Either way, the "rebellious powers" act to prevent souls from returning to God. In the Manichaean hymn cycles in Parthian, for instance, the Saviour says to the soul:

> I shall save you from every one of the rebellious powers
> who have frightened you with fear.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VIa:3; cf. MHCP pp.94–95*

See also: **blasphemy against the Holy Ghost** (▸2), **blindness**, **deafness**.

1. *Zostrianos* 8–9, *NHS31* pp.44–47.

saṃsār(a) (S/Pa/H/Pu) *Lit.* flowing *(sār)* together with *(sam);* moving about; a succession of rapidly changing states without particular purpose or goal; wandering, particularly from one body to another; the passage of the soul through the cycle of transmigration; being born again and again into the world to reap a karmic harvest of joys and sorrows; hence, the world, the material universe, mankind, temporal and worldly existence, worldly pursuits, worldly life, worldly interests, worldly illusion; a *saṃsārī* is hence a worldly person, a human being caught on the wheel of birth and death. ʻInāyat Khān summarizes:

> In Sanskrit, life in the world is called *saṃsāra.* It is pictured as living in a mist. One thinks and says and does and feels, yet all the time one does not fully know why. If a person knows one reason for it, there is another reason hidden behind it which he does not yet know. Very often conditions in life give the effect of captivity; sometimes it seems as if one has to walk between a river and a precipice; and to rise above conditions one needs wings, which not everyone has got.
>
> *ʻInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK8 p.247*

In Buddhism, *saṃsāra* is that which lies outside *nirvāṇa.* A saying in the *Dhammapada,* attributed to the Buddha on his attaining enlightenment, identifies desire as the "builder of this house" of the body that keeps the individual wandering in *saṃsāra:*

> I wandered through many births *(saṃsāra)*
> seeking the builder of this house,
> but found him not.
> It is suffering *(dukkha)* to be born repeatedly.
>
> O house builder! Now you have been discovered,
> and you will not build this house again.
> All your rafters have been broken,
> your ridgepole destroyed.
> The mind *(chitta)* has reached into the beyond,
> the extinction of desire achieved.
>
> *Dhammapada 11:8–9*

The Buddha also observes that he who "bears no resentment" – he whose will is completely aligned to the cosmic will, having no personal quarrel with it – will be free from *saṃsāra:*

A (truly) balanced man bears no resentment,
like a monument or a pool unsullied by mud.
To a man such as this, *saṃsāra* is no more.

Dhammapada 7:6

Among Hindu texts, the *Bhagavad Gītā* says that he whose attention is focused on God will be raised up from "this death-bound ocean of *saṃsāra*". Here, Kṛishṇa is speaking as the personification of the Divine:

O son of Pārtha!
Those who, with minds focused on me,
worship me, surrendering all their deeds to me,
taking refuge in me as the Supreme,
and meditating on me as the sole object of their love –
Them will I soon raise up from
this death-bound ocean of *saṃsāra.*

Bhagavad Gītā 12:6–7

On the other hand, he says:

People with no faith in the holy path *(dharma)*
fail to find me.
They remain entangled in the round of death and *saṃsāra.*

Bhagavad Gītā 9:3

The *Kaṭha Upanishad* says much the same:

He who has no understanding,
who has no control over his mind,
and always remains impure –
He never attains the goal,
but returns again to *saṃsāra.*

Kaṭha Upanishad 1:3.7

Likewise, the nineteenth-century mystic, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, writes:

How can you escape transmigration *(chaurāsī),*
when you do not enter the *Guru*'s boat?
Tossed about in *saṃsār,*
pounded, you go to the city of Death *(Yampur).*

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 33:18.10–11, SBP p.276

And Kabīr, similarly:

> This world *(saṃsār)* is like a paper bag
> that disintegrates in a few drops (of rain).
> *Kabīr, Shabdāvalī 1, Shabd 48:1, KSS1 p.38*

Only a more attractive power, coming from beyond the realms of the mind and *māyā* (illusion) which control and manifest this world, is capable of effecting a soul's release. This power is the melody of the Creative Power of God, His Word or Name. Hence, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh speaks of the soul's ascent beyond the forces of *māyā* and *saṃsār:*

> *Māyā* is transfixed,
> the waves of the mind subside,
> and the lotus within manifests itself.
> Like a fish, the soul bathes and cleanses itself
> in the sea of tranquillity....
> When the soul discovers the light of the Flame,
> and the stream of Melody,
> the mind and *māyā* are frustrated.
> Joyously the soul proceeds on to higher states,
> and the darkness of the world *(saṃsār)* disappears.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 41:12.1–2, 4–5, SBP p.373*

The *Gurus* whose writings are collected in the *Ādi Granth* also depict the world as a place of spiritual darkness:

> The world *(saṃsār)* is a well of poison:
> in it is the pitch darkness of spiritual ignorance and worldly love.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 838, MMS*

Release from it is effected by the mystic Name:

> The world *(saṃsār)* is ill, the Name *(Nām)* is the cure-all:
> without the true Lord, the filth of sin attaches to it (the soul).
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 687, MMS*

santāp(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* suffering, sorrow, torment, affliction, pain, pang, woe, trouble, distress, agony; the suffering of material existence. According to mystics, all suffering arises from forgetfulness of God:

> When man forgets Thee, O Lord,
> then all the sufferings *(dukh)* and sorrows *(santāp)* cling to him.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 963, MMS*

The solution, says Guru Amardās, is listening to the music of the divine Word:

> Listen ye to Word of bliss, O very fortunate ones,
> and all your longings shall be fulfilled.
> I have obtained Lord, the Supreme Being,
> and all my sorrows have departed.
> Hearing the true *Gurbāṇī* (*sachchī Bāṇī,* true Word),
> I am rid of the troubles, maladies and sufferings *(santāp).*
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 922, MMS*

See also: **duḥkha**.

sarāy (P/U/H) *Lit.* an inn or posting house, a serai, a dwelling for travellers, a temporary resting place.

See **caravanserai**.

sea The area of salt water on the earth's surface, as opposed to the land; metaphorically, either the sea of this world or the sea of God. In the Manichaean writings found in Chinese Turkestan, for instance, the disciple begs the Master:

> Lead and guide them (all living beings)
> away from this deep fiery sea.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.180:47*

As the stormy sea of this world, the metaphor is probably the origin of the miracle stories which describe Jesus as walking on the water.

See also: **baḥr** (2.1), **bhai jal**, **bhai sāgar**, **bhav jal**, **bhav sāgar**, **daryā** (2.1), **storm**.

shadow A dark area or shape cast on a surface by the blocking of light rays by an opaque object; metaphorically, this world, in the sense that it is caused by obstruction of the light of God, since shadow or darkness cannot exist without light. It is an image that seems to capture a glimpse of the unseen reality, as in the gnostic text *On the Origin of the World:*

> Seeing that everybody, gods of the world and mankind, says that nothing existed prior to chaos (the creation), I in distinction to them

> shall demonstrate that they are all mistaken, because they are not acquainted with the origin of chaos, nor with its root. Here is the demonstration.
>
> How well it suits all men, on the subject of chaos, to say that it is a kind of darkness! But in fact it comes from a shadow, which has been called by the name darkness. And the shadow comes from a substance that has existed since the beginning. It is, moreover, clear that it (the substance) existed before chaos came into being, and that the latter is posterior to the first substance....
>
> Now the eternal realm *(aeon)* of Truth has no shadow outside it, for the limitless light is everywhere within it. But its exterior is shadow, which has been called by the name 'darkness'. From it, there appeared a force, presiding over the darkness. And the forces that came into being subsequent to them called the shadow 'the limitless chaos'.
>
> *On the Origin of the World 97–98:1–2, 5; cf. NHS21 pp.28–31*

This is a complicated way of saying that the creation exists in increasingly less light than the divine Source of light or God. Mystics do point out, however, that no words – simple or complex – can really convey how the creation came into being.

Many mystics have described life in this world as a shadow or reflection of life in the higher regions. From another culture and another time, the Native North American, Black Elk, describes an experience where this became clear to him:

> I looked about me and could see that, what we then were doing was like a shadow cast upon the earth from yonder vision in the heavens, so bright it was, and clear. I knew the real was yonder, and the darkened dream of it was here.
>
> *Black Elk, BES p.169*

He also speaks of a similar experience of Crazy Horse:

> My father ... said that Crazy Horse dreamed and went into the world where there is nothing but the spirits of all things. That is the real world beyond this one, and everything we see here is something like a shadow from that world.
>
> *Black Elk, BES p.85*

As the shadow of God, the metaphor is also used to mean His protection and refuge.

See also: **shadow** (▸2), **ẓalmavet**.

shām (P) *Lit.* evening; symbolically, this world, the domain of diversity and separation. Contrasted in Sufi literature with *ṣubḥ* (dawn), an image alluding to enlightenment and the realization of divine unity.

See also: **maghrib**.

sharr (A/P) *Lit.* evil, ill; wickedness, vice, viciousness, malice; iniquity, injustice; harm, injury, damage; calamity, disaster; as in the expression, *al-sharr al-muṭlaq* (utter vice). Many Sufis have said that the source of evil *(sharr)* is Satan *(Shayṭān)*:

> Shaykh Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥamawī said that an angel discovers, and *Shayṭān* conceals, and 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, king of lovers, said that an angel is a means of goodness, discovery and grace, and *Shayṭān* is the means of evil *(sharr),* suffering and concealment.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil, Rasā'il-i Iẓāfī 3, IK p.403*

See also: **khaṭa'**, **pāpa**, **sin and evil**.

sickness See **disease**.

sin and evil Theologically, sin is the transgression of God's will or any law or principle regarded as an embodiment of it, together with the consequent condition of estrangement from God. More generally, sin is an offence against a religious or moral code of ethics or behaviour. Evil is generally understood to be something morally wrong or bad.

The religious and the mystical understanding of sin differ in certain respects. In religion, sin is generally understood to be associated with morality and ethics, although the basis for this understanding is not always clearly defined. Sin is simply held to be something fundamentally wrong and bad. Often, the motivation for avoiding sin is so that a person's soul may evade hell and go to heaven. Sin is also, in many instances, reckoned to be the act itself, rather than the thought behind it.

Religious concepts of sin are often hedged around with guilt, and confused with personal or cultural prejudices and feelings, so that what is considered sinful includes those forms of behaviour which contravene various beliefs or practices which may actually be of a quite arbitrary nature. Paul, for instance, in one of his lists of sins includes "heresies",[1] although what is one man's heresy may be another man's path to God. In any case, it cannot be said that there is anything sinful, *per se,* in a belief alone – whether

it be right or wrong – although incorrect belief can lead a person to sin, unknowingly.

Mystically, sin is understood as anything which keeps a soul away from God; it has nothing to do with particular religious beliefs. The mind is attracted to the physical senses and entertains desires and thoughts concerning the things and activities of the world. Every thought, every emotion and every desire leaves an impression upon the mind. Additionally, since deeds arises in thought (however fleeting), deeds also leave their impressions (however slight) upon the mind. Fundamentally, therefore, sin is a problem associated with mental tendencies and impressions, actions arising as secondary to mental activity.

The mind itself can go in only two directions – either towards the world or towards God. Mystically, going towards the world is sin. This means that even apparently good or innocuous actions can be sinful from a mystic point of view. Most actions, good or bad, are executed with the expectation of some reward or result. This expectation arises from the individual sense of self or ego and leaves its impression upon the mind, particularly if the expected result is not realized or if the result leads to the desire to repeat the action. Tendencies, habits and impressions are thus formed in the mind which all lead the mind into the world, away from God.

Those mystics who have openly taught reincarnation point out that it is these sins or impressions on the mind which constitute the burden which carries a soul from birth to birth, from life to life. It is sins which bring a soul to this world to repay the debts – etched in seed form upon the mind – that were created in previous lives. Thus, while good deeds may result in better lives in the future and bad deeds in worse lives, all deeds, good or bad, are like chains binding the soul to this world. Chains may be of gold or of iron, but nevertheless they perform the same function. All this, from a mystical perspective is covered by the term 'sin'. In this sense, sin is closely allied to the wide-ranging Indian concept of *karma,* which means action. The natural law regarding sin is actually the law of *karma* – the law of recompense or cause and effect.

Seen in the context of a creation which is created and ordered entirely by God, sin and evil can appear paradoxical. Some mystics, however, have pointed out that evil actually encourages a soul to seek God. Plotinus observes, for instance, that what is understood as evil is actually a part of the divine design, essential to the way in which creation is put together:

> We are like people ignorant of painting who reproach the artist for not putting pretty colours everywhere in the picture, when the artist has actually applied the appropriate colour to each and every part; or we are criticizing a drama because all its characters are not heroes, but also contains a slave and a coarse country bumpkin. Yet remove

these characters and the essence of the drama is lost: it is they that make it complete.

Plotinus, Enneads 3:2.11; cf. PA3 pp.78–81, PEC p.88

He even says that evil has a value and lies within the jurisdiction of the all-powerful and overseeing *Logos:*

> Besides, these happenings are not without purpose in the co-ordination and completion of the Whole.... Something may perish, but the universal *Logos* – from whose control nothing anywhere can escape – uses that ending as the beginning of something new.... (Thus,) some troubles such as poverty and sickness are helpful to the sufferers themselves. Even evil brings something of value. It acts as a lesson in right-doing, and in many ways, results in good. By bringing us face to face with the consequences of wrongdoing, it recalls us from lethargy, awakens the deeper mind and sets the spirit working. By contrast with the evils which are the lot of wrongdoers, it teaches the value of virtue. Not that evils exist for this purpose, but – as we have indicated – having come about, the universal *Logos* employs it to good purpose. This is indeed the sign of the greatest power: to be able to use the ignoble, nobly, and to use formlessness as the material from which to fashion new forms.

Plotinus, Enneads 3:2.5; cf. PA3 pp.58–61, PEC p.85

Just as darkness heightens the appreciation of light, Plotinus also suggests that evil provides a "clearer knowledge" of God:

> For those whose capacity is too weak to know evil with spiritual certainty without experience of it, the experience of evil brings a clearer knowledge of the Good.

Plotinus, Enneads 4:8.7; cf. PA4 pp.418–19, PEC p.204

The mystical viewpoint on sin and evil, therefore, is not wholly negative. The two have a part to play in the overall scheme of things. Without them, the creation could not continue, and in the end they may actually play a crucial role in turning the soul towards God; for only when there is discomfort will a person seek to remove it.

See also: **karma** (6.3), **khaṭa'**, **pāpa**, **sin (in early Christianity)**, **sin (in Judaism)**, **sinners**.

1. *Galatians* 5:20.

sin (in early Christianity) Very little is recorded in the gospels concerning Jesus' teaching on sin. He did teach, however, that even an "idle word" is taken into account in the scheme of things:

> I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak,
> they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.
> For by thy words thou shalt be justified,
> and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
>
> *Matthew 12:36–37, KJV*

The compiler of Matthew's gospel was writing with a Jewish perception and a belief in a final Day of Judgment, presenting Jesus' teachings in that light. Mystically, the time of death is the individual Day of Judgment for a soul, and Jesus' saying is interpreted in this manner in an early Coptic text, the *Death of Joseph:*

> A just balance and a just measure are those
> wherewith my Father will take account with you....
> A single word of jest that you shall speak
> shall be required of you.
> Even as no one can escape death,
> so no one can escape those things which he has done,
> whether it be good or evil.
>
> *Death of Joseph I; cf. CAG p.131*

Mystics say that this accounting takes place not just in heaven and hell, but more especially in this world. This is what results in the preordaining of destiny. As Jesus also said:

> Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
> And one of them shall not fall on the ground
> without your Father.
> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
>
> *Matthew 10:29–30, KJV*

Even seemingly inconsequential things like the death of a sparrow or the number of hairs on a person's head are all in the hands of the Father, and are all "numbered" or preordained.

Sin and Freedom

It is often because of reincarnation that mystics have described this world as the place of sin and the place of death. This is possibly the meaning under-

lying some of Jesus' dialogues with the Jews, attributed to him in John's gospel. For instance, Jesus says:

"I go my way, and ye shall seek me,
  and shall die in your sins:
Whither I go, ye cannot come."

Then said the Jews,
"Will he kill himself? Because he saith,
  'Whither I go, ye cannot come.'"

And he said unto them,
"Ye are from beneath; I am from above:
  ye are of this world; I am not of this world.
I said therefore unto you,
  that ye shall die in your sins:
For if ye believe not that I am he,
  ye shall die in your sins."

John 8:21–24, KJV

According to John's gospel, Jesus said that he could leave this world and return to God whenever he wished. He is described as a true Son of God. But others, he said, would "die in your sins" – they would be the victim of their sins and would go wherever their sins dictated. This is why Jesus also links true freedom with being made free from sin:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him,
"If ye continue in my Word,
  then are ye my disciples indeed;
And ye shall know the Truth,
  and the Truth shall make you free."

They answered him,
"We be Abraham's seed,
  and were never in bondage to any man:
How sayest thou, 'Ye shall be made free?'"

Jesus answered them,
"Verily, verily, I say unto you,
  whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
And the servant abideth not in the house for ever:
  but the Son abideth ever.

> If the Son, therefore, shall make you free,
> ye shall be free indeed."
>
> *John 8:31–36, KJV*

He says that those who "continue in my Word", who continue with their meditation on the Word, are his true disciples. They will come to know the mystic Truth, the Word and God – and that will make them free by erasing all traces of sin from their minds.

In John's dialogue, the Jews then query Jesus' meaning, saying that they have always been free, they were never slaves or "in bondage to any man". This creates the opportunity for Jesus' reply that sin itself is binding. One who commits sin is the "servant of sin", he says, adding, "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever." The house here is the body, and the "servant of sin" has to move from house to house, from body to body.

The Son, however, "abideth ever" in the sense that the Word, the real Son of God, is an eternal Power, manifested humanly as a Master. And if this "Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Only the Word and the Master are able to free a soul from sin.

The Source of Sin

Mystics also point out that the origin of all sin is within – it comes from the mind. Hence, to discipline the body is insufficient to cleanse a person of sin. Nor will ritual ablutions of various kinds, as practised in Judaism of those times, result in inner cleanliness. This is what Jesus meant when he said:

> Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man;
> But that which cometh out of the mouth,
> this defileth a man....
> Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth
> in at the mouth goeth into the belly,
> and is cast out into the draught?
> But those things which proceed out of the mouth
> come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.
> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,
> fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
> These are the things which defile a man:
> but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.
>
> *Matthew 15:11, 17–20, KJV*

And similarly:

> Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
> A good man out of the good treasure of the heart
> bringeth forth good things:

And an evil man out of the evil treasure
bringeth forth evil things.

Matthew 12:34–35, KJV

Jesus is saying that whatever is within the mind is reflected in the words, deeds and demeanour of a person. It is from there that sin proceeds – from the mind, the agent of the negative power. This also means that, like the Lord, the devil or the negative power is also within. Jesus' meaning is echoed in the *Acts of John,* when John speaks to a young man who – in a somewhat gruesome tale – has tried to mutilate himself in a fit of remorse after falling a prey to lust with another man's wife, an act which had also led to the murder of his own father:

> But John said to him, "He that put it into your heart, young man, to kill your father and become the adulterer of another man's wife, the same made you think it a right deed to take away also the unruly members. But you should have done away, not with the place of sin, but the thought which through those members showed itself harmful: for it is not the instruments that are injurious, but the unseen springs by which every shameful emotion is stirred and comes to light.
>
> "Repent therefore, my child, of this fault, and having learnt the wiles of Satan you shall have God to help you in all the necessities of your soul."
>
> *Acts of John 54; cf. ANT p.240*

It is the "thought" within, not the bodily members nor anything outside the body, which is the source of sin. Jesus means the same thing when he says:

There are some eunuchs,
which were so born from their mother's womb:
And there are some eunuchs,
which were made eunuchs of men:
And there be eunuchs,
which have made themselves eunuchs
for the kingdom of heaven's sake.
He that is able to receive it,
let him receive it.

Matthew 19:12, KJV

Some people are born eunuchs, he says, others have been made so. But the real eunuchs are the celibates, those who have learnt to control their minds

for the sake of realizing God. They are the ones who have really conquered their bodily tendencies, and dealt effectively with the source of sin.

Purity of Heart

It is because sin – in its mystic sense – is the barrier between man and God that all mystics have sought the purification of their minds so that their souls may see God. As Jesus said:

> Blessed are the pure in heart,
> for they shall see God.
> *Matthew 5:8, KJV*

Purification of the mind of all 'sinful' or material tendencies is not so easy. Consequently, one of the commonest refrains in all mystic writings is the plea of the soul to God for mercy, and for the cleansing and the purification of sins. In the devotional psalms from the Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, the writer praises the Lord for His great mercy in purifying the "erring spirit of a multitude of sins":

> By Thy mercies and by Thy great goodness,
> Thou hast strengthened the spirit of man
> in the face of the scourge;
> And hast purified the erring spirit
> of a multitude of sins,
> that it may declare Thy marvels
> in the presence of all Thy creatures.
> *Thanksgiving Hymns IX:30–35 (6), CDSS p.255*

This sentiment is often expressed in mystic literature.

See also: **reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity)** (6.3), **sin and evil**.

sin (in Judaism) The understanding of sin in Judaism has its roots in the Hebrew Bible, where more than twenty different terms for sin are used, indicating the importance of the subject and its many nuances in the lives of the early Israelites. The three main terms are *ḥet, pesha'* and *'avon,* often found together.

Ḥet (and its alternate form *ḥatat*) generally refers to a failure to live up to a particular standard or to perform some duty. In modern English, this might be called an offence. In the Bible, it can refer to moral, ethical, social, or even cultic matters. *Pesha'* implies a breach, such as a breach of

a covenant – it is the action that destroys the trust or agreement between two parties. *'Avon* generally designates crookedness.

All three terms were applied to the Israelites' failure to adhere to the covenant which God had made with Abraham, and then renewed through Moses when He revealed the *Torah* on Mount Sinai, according to a literal interpretation of biblical events.[1] In the Bible, therefore, sin is mainly a breach of this covenant, rather than a moral or ethical notion.

There are several passages in the writings of the prophet Jeremiah which summarize the biblical understanding of sin. Instead of worshipping *Yahweh,* the one God, as the covenant had stipulated, the people reverted to the worship of pagan gods, abandoning the teachings they had agreed to keep:

> And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt tell this people all these words, and they shall say to thee, "Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? Or what is our iniquity *('avon)?* Or what is our sin *(ḥet)* that we have committed against the Lord our God?"
>
> Then shalt thou say to them, "'Because your fathers have forsaken me,' says the Lord, 'and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my *Torah* (teaching); and you have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, you walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, that they may not hearken to me: therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that you know not, neither you nor your fathers; and there shall you serve other gods day and night; for I shall show you no favour.'"
>
> *Jeremiah 16:10–13, KB*

The passage also suggests an underlying presumption of individual responsibility for action, since God's punishment of the Israelites follows the law of recompense, which dictates that offenders be punished for their sins. This law is embodied in the well-known biblical phrase, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".[2] In Hebrew, this principle is called *sakhar va'onesh* (reward and punishment) and is regarded as a law governing existence.

Jewish scholars generally contend that the Bible does not teach a concept of 'original sin', a state of sin into which man is born, as Christianity teaches. The sin of Adam and Eve is interpreted as a breach of their covenant with God – they had agreed not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but they disobeyed God and did so. Thus, their sin did not come from lust, or the union of male and female, but from their disobedience. Nevertheless, there are certain biblical passages in the Bible which suggest a belief that man is born in sin.

One of the psalms, for example, is said to have been written in anguish by King David after awakening to the realization that his passions have

driven him to commit a terrible moral sin – he had arranged for the murder of the husband of the woman he wished to marry. In the course of his lament, he indicates a belief in man's essential sinfulness – "I was shaped in iniquity *('avon),* and in sin *(ḥet)* did my mother conceive me" – and begs for God's compassion:

> Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy steadfast love;
> According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies
> blot out my transgressions *(pesha').*
> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity *('avon),*
> and cleanse me from my sin *(ḥatat).*
> For I acknowledge my transgressions *(pesha'):*
> and my sin *(ḥatat)* is ever before me.
> Against Thee, Thee alone, have I sinned *(ḥet),*
> and done that which is evil in Thy sight:
> So that Thou art justified in Thy sentence,
> and clear in Thy judgment.
> Behold, I was shaped in iniquity *('avon),*
> and in sin *(ḥet)* did my mother conceive.
> Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts:
> therefore teach me wisdom in the inmost heart.
> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
> wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
> Make me to hear joy and gladness:
> that the bones which Thou has broken may rejoice.
> Hide Thy face from my sins *(ḥet),*
> and blot out all my iniquities *('avon).*
> Create in me a clean heart,
> O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
> Cast me not away from Thy presence,
> and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
> Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
> and uphold me with a willing spirit.
>
> *Psalm 51:2–14, KB*

In another place, a realistic view of man's propensity for sin is expressed:

> There is no man who does not sin.
>
> *1 Kings 8:46, KB*

Since human beings have a conscience which seeks to be allayed, the Israelite priests instituted a system of animal sacrifices and offerings as expiation for sins. It is believed that this practice stemmed from a belief that

the suffering of another being could stand as a substitute for the suffering of the sinner, as payment for his sin. The prophets, however, often describe God's displeasure with such sacrifices. They say that God wants justice and righteousness, kindness and humility from His lovers. The prophets Hosea and Amos, for example, speaking in God's name, say that the sacrifices are ineffective atonement for sin – only love, knowledge of God, righteousness and human justice will suffice – qualities derived from the inner worship of God:

> For I desire loyal love, and not sacrifice,
> and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
>
> *Hosea 6:6, KB*

> I hate, I despise your feasts,
> and I will not smell the sacrifices of your solemn assemblies.
> Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meal offerings,
> I will not accept them:
> Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.
> Take away from me the noise of thy songs,
> for I will not hear the melody of thy lutes.
> But let justice roll down like waters,
> and righteousness like a mighty stream.
>
> *Amos 5:21–24, KB*

The concept of sin that is prevalent in contemporary Judaism has its roots in Talmudic times (pre-C6th CE). During this period, following the Roman destruction of the second Temple in 70 CE, Temple sacrifices no longer being possible, prayers and ritualized confessions were instituted in their place.

The rabbis classified sin in two broad categories: sins of omission and sins of commission – failure to perform the positive commandments of the *Torah,* and failure to desist from the negative ones. For example: "Honour thy father and mother"[3] is a positive precept. Failure to give them proper respect is therefore a sin of omission. Similarly, failure to recite certain prayers at the prescribed times is a sin of omission. On the other hand, the Ten Commandments forbid adultery.[4] An adulterous relationship is thus a sin of commission.

The rabbis also divided sin into offences against God and offences against fellow human beings. They taught that God could forgive sins against Himself, but sin against another person requires the other person's forgiveness to clear the account, before God is able to grant forgiveness.

The rabbis categorized murder, idolatry, adultery and incest as the worst sins, for which the penalty is the greatest. They taught that man's tendency

to sin comes from the evil inclination, the *yeẓer ha-ra'*, which is always present in him. This *yeẓer ha-ra'* is essentially the negative tendency of the mind, and the rabbis identified it with death and Satan:

> Satan, the *yeẓer ha-ra'*, and the angel of death are one and the same.
>
> *Babylonian Talmud, Batra 16*

The rabbis used a metaphor to describe how evil habits or negative tendencies ingratiate themselves. At first, the *yeẓer ha-ra'* is called a passer-by, then a guest, and finally "one who occupies the house".[5]

Judaism presupposes that human beings are responsible for their sins, and that they will be judged according to their actions, but that true repentance – *teshuvah* (*lit.* return) – can bring about divine mercy. This is the theme of the Jewish holy days of *Rosh ha-Shannah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). During this period, it is believed that humanity stands before God, awaiting judgment for its sins and hoping for mercy. According to Jewish legend, on the New Year, the Book of Remembrance is opened and a person's sentence or judgment is written; but it is not sealed until the Day of Atonement, ten days later. During this time, God's mercy can be invoked, and a harsh judgment cancelled, if He is approached in an attitude of true *teshuvah.*

In medieval times, transmigration of the soul *(gilgul)* was viewed by Jewish Kabbalists as a punishment for certain types of sins, as well as an opportunity for further spiritual growth. However, it was believed that the most severe or 'mortal' sins were punished with complete extinction of the soul, without any possibility of an afterlife or even resurrection when the Messiah should come at the end of the world.

Sin as a Participant in Jewish History

The melancholy prophecies of Jeremiah and the other prophets who warned the Jews of the disastrous consequences of their sinful behaviour were followed by the actual destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, in the sixth century BCE, when the Jews were taken into exile. From such experiences, Jews began to make a connection between their behaviour and the misfortunes they suffered. Later, in the first century CE, after the destruction of the second, rebuilt Temple, they again interpreted their trials as punishment for their sinful and rebellious behaviour – for not being true to the Covenant. They thus viewed God as a power deeply and intimately involved in their history, taking their misfortunes to be an expression of His displeasure and His manner of correcting them. Similarly, in the sixteenth century, Jews interpreted the suffering brought about by the Spanish Inquisition and their exile from Spain as punishment for their sins, once again as a reflection of God's dissatisfaction.

On a mystic level, the Kabbalists of medieval times believed that human sin, which was understood as a disruption in the natural order, created disharmony in the celestial realms, causing God to withdraw into His transcendent Self, thus removing Himself from direct involvement in their lives. The disharmony in the celestial realms was expressed through the symbolism of the *sefirot* – the successive emanation of divine qualities and power by means of which, it was believed, the creation took place. The *sefirot* were generally divided into the polar opposites of active–passive, positive–negative, male–female, and so on. When in harmony, the divine energy flows freely between them, from the highest level down into the creation. However, when human beings sin, it causes disharmony among the *sefirot,* problems arise in the natural order of the creation, and the divine energy cannot flow normally into the creation. In a sense, it is another way of saying that when humanity sins, God 'withdraws' from participation in their lives.

A similar idea was brought to bear on the Jewish understanding of the *Shekhinah.* The *Shekhinah* represents the divine indwelling presence, immanent in the creation. Conceived by the medieval Kabbalists as the 'feminine' aspect of God, and symbolized as God's 'bride', the *Shekhinah* allows the divine energy or power to descend from the heights of the withdrawn, transcendent Godhead, and enter the creation. It thus performs the same function as the lowest of the *sefirot.* The result of human sinfulness, from this point of view, is that the bride becomes estranged from her divine Husband.

According to this doctrine, God Himself is in need of man's repentance. To this end, the Kabbalists introduced practices known as *tikkunim* (perfections) and *yiḥudim* (unifications). These included various meditation techniques as well as certain types of prayers and rituals, all aimed at restoring divine harmony between the *sefirot,* and bringing about a reunion between the *Shekhinah* and God, the immanent and the transcendent.

See also: **Evil One** (6.1), **karma** (6.3), **khaṭa'**, **pāpa**, **Shekhinah** (▸2), **sin and evil**, **sin (in early Christianity)**.

1. *Exodus* 19:1*ff.*
2. *Exodus* 21:24.
3. *Exodus* 20:12.
4. *Exodus* 20:14.
5. *Babylonian Talmud, Sukkot* 52b.

sinner(s) One who sins, sin being generally understood as an offence against a moral or religious code of conduct and ethics. In Christianity, human beings

are believed to be born in sin, in the sense that they are born as members of a sinful race, a consequence of the first human sin, that of Adam, as related in *Genesis.* Traditionally, the sin of Adam is believed to have been inherited by future generations of human beings. This concept of original sin has been variously interpreted by theologians, but is generally agreed to arise from being born as members of a race that has inherited both good and evil from its past. In this sense, every human being is regarded as a sinner.

From a more universal and mystical viewpoint, it seems evident that human life and human nature are such that no one is perfect; to a greater or lesser extent, all are sinners. Everyone transgresses even the most general of moral or ethical codes to a greater or lesser extent, in thought or deed. As the author of the New Testament letter, *1 John,* says:

> This then is the message which we have heard of him: and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.... If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.
>
> *1 John 1:5–8, 10, KJV*

God, he says, is light. If therefore a person asserts that they walk with God, yet is not full of that mystic light within themselves, they are not telling the truth. Likewise, if such a person says that they have no sin, then again, they are being untruthful. The same truth is highlighted by Jesus in the well-known anecdote, in John's gospel, of the woman caught in adultery. According to the story, the "scribes and Pharisees" bring the woman to Jesus, suggesting that she be stoned according to the law of Moses, and asking Jesus his opinion. Their intention is devious. They know that Jesus will not condone her being stoned. Yet if he refutes the law of Moses, he can be castigated as a heretic. But Jesus is equal to the occasion. After a pause, he replies:

> "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." ... And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"
>
> She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."
>
> *John 8:7, 9–11, KJV*

Jesus knew that no one is without sin in this world, and that if anyone honestly examines his conscience he will know that he is not in a position to point a finger at others. Incidentally, the provenance of this story is uncertain, since it does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of John's gospel. Nevertheless, the truth it conveys remains unaltered.

According to the gospels, Jesus was often accused of consorting with sinners. But he had a ready answer to those who levelled such accusations:

> And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.
>
> And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"
>
> When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
>
> *Mark 2:14–17, KJV*

Publicans were the collectors of various taxes levied in those times and often seem to be grouped with sinners, perhaps because the post was open to bribery and corruption of various kinds. But Jesus' point is that the physician is only interested in the sick person. Similarly, he has only come for those who recognize their sins, not for the self-righteous and those who think that they are in perfect spiritual health. Luke's gospel relates one of Jesus' many parables in which this point is made quite clear:

> And he (Jesus) spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
>
> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."
>
> And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."
>
> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
>
> *Luke 18:9–14, KJV*

Jesus casts a Pharisee in the role of the self-righteous person who feels no need of God's mercy. He intimates that only a person who feels the need of forgiveness will go to one who can forgive. The proud man will be "abased" in the sense that he will not find God. The humble person, on the other hand, will be "exalted" by being taken back to God.

Mystics commonly refer to man's unconsciousness of his imperfection and sin. Thus, in one of the biblical psalms, the writer speaks of the sinner who is quite unable to see himself for what he is:

> The wicked man's oracle is sin
> in the depths of his heart;
> There is no fear of God
> before his eyes.
>
> He sees himself with too flattering an eye
> to detect and detest his guilt;
> All he says tends to mischief and deceit,
> he has turned his back on Wisdom.
>
> How best to work mischief he plots,
> even when he is in bed;
> He persists in his evil course,
> he never rejects what is bad.
>
> *Psalm 36:1–4, JB*

The sinner, says the psalmist, is too lost in his ego, "He sees himself with too flattering an eye," to perceive the way his mind is behaving. He even takes credit for his human perversities, considering them to be a matter of accomplishment and pride. His mind never ceases its activity, "even when he is in bed"! His mind is quite unable to discriminate the good from the bad.

Sin is such that it clouds the mind of the one who sins, preventing him from seeing himself clearly. The more the mind is full of human imperfection, the less conscious it is and the less it is able to see itself in its true colours. This is the meaning of a forthright passage in the gnostic text, the *Book of Thomas the Contender:*

> Woe to you, captives, for you are bound in caverns!
> You laugh! In mad laughter you rejoice!
> You neither realize your perdition,
> nor do you reflect on your circumstances,
> nor have you understood
> that you dwell in darkness and death!

On the contrary, you are drunk with the fire,
  and full of bitterness.
Your mind is deranged on account
  of the burning that is in you;
And sweet to you are the poison
  and the blows of your enemies!

And the darkness rose for you like the light,
  for you surrendered your freedom for servitude!
You darkened your hearts
  and surrendered your thoughts to folly,
  and you filled your thoughts
  with the smoke of the fire that is in you! ...

Woe to you who hope in the flesh
  and in the prison that will perish!
How long will you be oblivious?
And how long will you suppose
  that the imperishables will perish too?
Your hope is set upon the world,
  and your god is this life!
You are corrupting your souls! ...

Woe to you in the fire that burns within you,
  for it is insatiable!
Woe to you because of the wheel
  that turns in your minds!
  Book of Thomas the Contender 143, NHS21 pp.196–99

Likewise, the sinful man of this world is addressed by Judas Thomas in the *Acts of Thomas,* who points out that his sinfulness is due to lack of contact with the Creative Word, the mystic "Voice" or "Medicine of Life":

You have not heard the tidings of the new Life,
  and the Voice of the Preacher of Life (the Saviour)
  has not fallen on your (inner) ears.
For you have not yet tasted the Medicine of Life,
  nor are you freed from longings for the perishable.

You stand in the temporal life,
  and the everlasting life you know not....
You stand clad in robes that grow old,
  and long not for those that are eternal.

You are proud of this beauty which vanishes,
and care not about the unsightliness of your (eternal) soul.
You are proud of (owning) a number of slaves,
and your own soul from slavery you have not set free.
You are proud of the pomp of many attendants,
and you are not delivered from the judgment of death.

Acts of Thomas 135; cf. AAA p.269, ANT p.423, MAA p.232

Mystical and religious teachers both exhort man to turn from sin and face God. Hence, the author of the *Acts of Philip* writes:

Renounce Satan, my brethren, and believe in the Messiah.
Flee from the darkness and come to the celestial Light.
Quit the destroying left hand,
and the unconquered Right Hand will receive you.
Be delivered from the fiery Gehenna,
and you will rejoice and be glad in the paradise of Eden.

Strip off the old man,
who is corrupted by the lusts of Error,
and put on the new man, Jesus the Messiah,
who is renewed by knowledge in the likeness of His Creator.
Avoid and flee from the desire of women, which burns like fire
and destroys those who are inflamed with it;
And trust in God and be glad.

History of Philip, AAA p.80

The sinner, he says, can become sinless by turning wholeheartedly to God.

See also: **karma** (6.3), **khaṭa'**, **pāpa**, **prostitute**, **publicans and harlots**, **sin and evil**, **sin (in early Christianity)**, **sin (in Judaism)**.

sitr (A/P) (pl. *sutūr*) *Lit.* a veil, a covering, that which conceals; mystically, that which veils the soul from God. The first veil with which a person has to contend is their own human nature:

From the human point of view, *sitr* is the veil of humanness between the soul and God, lasting until the unseen Light appears, and the veil disappears. From God's point of view, *sitr* is Himself veiled by Himself from the devotee, because of the human condition.

Most people are in the veil: *sitr* is a punishment for them, but a mercy to the chosen ones. If God did not conceal Himself from them, they would be consumed (by Him).

Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Ṣūfīyah, ISQ p.36, in FLI p.458

Because His light is so powerful, He veils Himself, even from the devotees, the "chosen ones".

Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī adds that the "two worlds" – the material and heavenly realms – also veil the soul from God:

In *Ṣūfī* allegorical language, *sitr* means the veil of the two worlds, of the attachments and habits of the mind, and of the desire for the results of one's actions, all of which are veils covering divinity.... And for us, being human is our veil. God speaks from behind the veil.

Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.242, in FNT7 p.68

Sitr is also used for the devotee's concealment of the spiritual experiences and progress bestowed upon him or her by God.

See also: **al-ḥijāb**.

sleep A state of physiological and psychological rest in which consciousness of the sensory world is largely suspended, and the metabolic rate slows down; metaphorically, life in this world, where the soul is dormant and the mind and senses are active. Just as a man who is dreaming only realizes his dream to be an illusion when he wakes, so too it is only when a soul rises to a spiritual level of consciousness that he realizes the waking state of the material world to be no more than a dream. Hence, in the *Acts of John,* the soul is exhorted:

Awake, and open your soul:
cast off from yourself this heavy sleep.

Acts of John 21; cf. ANT p.230

In the *Acts of Thomas,* Jesus is identified as one who is not asleep and who awakens those who sleep, as one who lives and gives life to those who are spiritually dead:

Glory be to you, the Defender and Helper
of them that come unto your refuge!
Who sleeps not, and awakens them that are asleep,
who lives and gives life to them that lie in death!

Acts of Thomas 60; cf. ANT p.393

Similarly, Paul also writes, quoting a text that has never been identified:

> Wherefore he saith, "Awake thou that sleepest,
> and arise from the dead,
> and Christ shall give thee light."
>
> *Ephesians 5:14, KJV*

Using the same metaphor, the author of the *Psalms of Solomon* makes the question personal, addressing himself:

> Why do you sleep, my soul:
> why do you not praise the Lord?
>
> *Psalms of Solomon 3:1; cf. AOT p.658, OTP2 p.654*

And again, making it evident that the sleep of the soul is to be equated with being "far from God":

> While my soul slumbered, far away from the Lord,
> I almost slipped into the lethargy
> of the sleep of those far from God –
> My soul was almost poured out to death,
> close to the gates of *Sheol,* alongside the sinner.
>
> My soul was thus separated from the Lord God....
> had not the Lord brought me help in His everlasting mercy.
> He goaded me, as a horse is spurred,
> to awaken me to Himself,
> my Saviour and Helper at all times saved me.
>
> *Psalms of Solomon 16:1–4; cf. AOT p.675, OTP2 pp.664–65*

The Greek philosopher-mystic, Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE), is also fond of the metaphor. He points out enigmatically that those who are spiritually awake see the same God in everything. But those who are asleep in this world live in a private reality created by their own mind:

> To the awakened,
> there is a single Cosmos (Reality), common to all;
> Sleepers each have a private cosmos of their own.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 15; cf. PAC2*

And elsewhere, he adds the admonition:

> One should not act or speak as if he were asleep.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 14, HPW p.20*

He also says, in his enigmatic way, that at night, in meditation, a person who has been able to withdraw from the sensory panorama presented to his physical vision, extinguishes the outer light and finds the spiritual light within himself. Then, he is truly living. He has died to the material world, and appears outwardly to be sleeping. But during the day, when dealing with the mundane affairs of physical existence, he is as if asleep:

In the deep night,
  a man who has quenched his sight and died,
  kindles a light within himself.
While living he approximates
  to one who has died and is sleeping;
While awake, he approximates to one who sleeps.

Heraclitus, Fragment 65, PAC2

Around two thousand years later, the same enigma is described by Guru Nānak in the *Ādi Granth:*

The counterfeit, one calls the genuine,
  and the worth of the genuine, he knows not.
The blind man goes by the name of an assayer (an inspector):
  strange is this dark age.
The one who is slept (asleep), he calls awake,
  and one who is awake, he says (calls) asleep.
The living one, he says (calls) dead,
  and he weeps not for those who are really dead.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 229, MMS

Guru Nānak also says that the soul in this world is in a dream, where its experiences are like the imagination of sleep:

As a man goes astray in dream at night, till his sleep lasts:
  so does go amiss the mortal,
  within whose heart is ego and love of duality,
  and who is in the power of the mammon-serpent (serpent of *māyā*).
Through *Guru*'s instruction *(Gurmat),* does mortal realize,
  and see that this world is but a dream.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 63, MMS

See also: **dream, jāgnā, khvāb**.

snare(s) See **nets**, **Snarer** (6.1).

spiritual ignorance Ignorance of who and what the self really is, of the true purpose of human life, and of God; nescience. Ignorance means to ignore something which is otherwise observable, and can be experienced or known. God is within every person and within His entire creation; nothing moves or exists without His Command. Yet man is generally ignorant of His presence either within or without. That man has forgotten or is ignoring the essential spiritual nature of his own being is an important concept to grasp, and mystics of all cultures have spoken of it.

Among the gnostic writers, for instance, the author of the *Gospel of Truth* first describes the anguish of the creation in its ignorance of God. He then goes on to depict life lived in spiritual ignorance as a bad dream or nightmare:

> They (the materially inclined) were ignorant of the Father, He being the one whom they did not see. Since it was terror and disturbance and instability, and doubt and division, because of these there were many illusions and empty fictions at work, as if they were sunk in sleep and found themselves in disturbing dreams.
>
> (In such dreams, there is) either a place to which they are fleeing, or without strength they come (from) having chased after others, or they are involved in striking blows, or they are receiving blows themselves, or they have fallen from high places, or they take off into the air though they do not even have wings. Again, sometimes (it is as) if people were murdering them, though there is no one even pursuing them, or they themselves are killing their neighbours, for they have been stained with their blood.
>
> But when those who are going through all these things wake up, they see nothing – they who were (previously) in the midst of all these disturbances – for they (such dreams) are nothing. Such is the way of those who have cast ignorance aside from themselves like sleep, not esteeming it as anything; nor do they esteem its works as solid things either, but they leave them behind like a dream in the night. The knowledge of the Father, they value as the dawn.
>
> This is the way each one has acted, as though asleep at the time when he was ignorant. And this is the way he has come to knowledge, as if he had awakened. Good for the man who will return and awaken. And blessed is he (the Saviour) who has opened the eyes of the (spiritually) blind.
>
> *Gospel of Truth 28–30; cf. NHS22 pp.98–101*

Mystics are unanimous in describing this world as a place of ignorance. In the gnostic revelation, the *First Apocalypse of James,* the 'speaker' (James the brother of Jesus), addressing Jesus, describes the world itself as "a great ignorance":

For you descended into a great ignorance,
  but you have not been defiled by anything in it.
For you descended into a great mindlessness,
  and your recollection remained.

First Apocalypse of James 28, NHS11 pp.74–77

And:

You have come with knowledge *(gnosis),*
  that you might rebuke their forgetfulness.
You have come with recollection,
  that you might rebuke their ignorance.

First Apocalypse of James 28, NHS11 pp.74–77

Again, in the *Teachings of Silvanus,* the writer advises the soul to seek Wisdom, the creative Power, which he also calls the *Nous* (Intelligence) or *Logos* (Word), and relinquish "death", "sleep", "forgetfulness", "drunkenness" and "nescience" or spiritual "ignorance":

My son, do not fear anyone except God alone, the Exalted One. Cast the deceitfulness of the devil from you. Accept the light for your eyes, and cast the darkness from you. Live in Christ, and you will acquire a treasure in heaven. Do not become like a sausage made of many things which are useless, and do not become a guide in your blind ignorance.

My son, listen to my teaching which is good and useful, and end the sleep which weighs heavily upon you. Depart from the forgetfulness which fills you with darkness, since if you were unable to do anything, I would not have said these things to you. But Christ has come in order to give you this gift. Why do you pursue the darkness when the light is at your disposal? Why do you drink stale water when sweet is available to you? Wisdom summons you, yet you desire folly. Not by your own desire do you do these things, but it is the animal nature within you that does them....

Wisdom summons you in her goodness, saying, "Come to me, all of you, O foolish ones, that you may receive a gift, the understanding which is good and excellent. I am giving you a high-priestly garment which is woven entirely of Wisdom." What else is evil death except ignorance? What else is evil darkness except familiarity with forgetfulness! Cast your anxiety upon God alone. Do not become desirous of gold and silver which are profitless, but clothe yourself with Wisdom like a robe. Wear knowledge like a crown, and be seated upon a throne of perception. For these are yours, and you will receive them again on high at another time.

For a foolish man usually puts on folly like a robe, and like a garment of sorrow he puts on shame. He crowns himself with ignorance and takes his seat upon a throne of nescience. For while he is [without the *Logos*], he leads only himself astray, for he is guided by ignorance. He goes the ways of the desire of every passion. He swims in the desires of life and has sunk. To be sure, he thinks he finds profit when he does all those things which are without profit. The wretched man who goes through all these things will die because he does not have the *Nous,* the Helmsman. He is like a ship which the wind tosses to and fro, and like a loose horse which has no rider; for this (man) lost the rider which is the *Logos;* for the wretched one went astray because he did not want advice. He was thrown to and fro by three evils: he acquired death as a father, ignorance as a mother, and evil counsels he acquired as friends and brothers. Therefore, foolish one, you should mourn for yourself. From now on, then, my son, return to your divine nature....

But since you cast from yourself God, the holy Father, the true Life, the Spring of Life, therefore you have obtained death as a father and have acquired ignorance as a mother. They have robbed you of the true knowledge....

O soul, O laggard one, be sober and shake off your drunkenness, which is the work of ignorance. If you lag behind and live in the body, you dwell in rusticity. When you entered into a bodily birth, you were begotten. Come into being inside the bridal chamber! Be illuminated in mind!

Teachings of Silvanus 88–91, 94; cf. NHS30 pp.288–97, 304–7

Many mystics have written similarly and at length concerning spiritual ignorance. Their purpose is not to denigrate or disempower their readers, but to exhort them seek the higher life of the spirit. The unknown author of the *Gospel of Philip* explains that spiritual ignorance survives only so long as it remains undetected; but, like many other things in life, as soon as it is revealed, it dies. Recognition is therefore the way to destroy spiritual ignorance:

Most things in the world, as long as their inner parts are hidden, stand upright and live. If they are revealed, they die, as is illustrated by the visible man: as long as the intestines of the man are hidden, the man is alive; when his intestines are exposed and come out of him, the man will die.

So also with the tree: while its root is hidden, it sprouts and grows. If its root is exposed, the tree dries up. So it is with every birth that is in the world, not only with the revealed (physical birth), but with the hidden (spiritual baptism).

For so long as the root of wickedness is hidden, it is strong. But when it is recognized, it is dissolved. When it is revealed, it perishes. That is why the word says, "Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees."[1] It will not merely cut – what is cut sprouts again – but the axe penetrates deeply until it brings up the root. Jesus pulled out the root of the whole place, while others did it only partially.

As for ourselves, let each one of us dig down after the root of evil which is within oneself, and pull it out from one's heart by the root. It will be pulled out if we recognize it. But if we are ignorant of it, it takes root in us and yields its fruit in our heart. It masters us. We are its slaves. It takes us captive, to make us do what we do not want; and what we do want, we do not do. It is powerful because we have not recognized it. While it exists, it is active. Ignorance is the mother of all evil. Ignorance will result in death, because those that come from ignorance neither were nor are nor shall be [in the Truth. Those who are in the Truth] will become perfect when the whole Truth is revealed.

For Truth is like ignorance: while it is hidden, it rests in itself, but when it is revealed and is recognized, it is praised inasmuch as it is stronger than ignorance and error. It gives freedom. The word said, "If you know the Truth, the Truth will make you free."[2] Ignorance is a slave. Knowledge is freedom. If we are joined to it, it will bring our fulfilment.

Gospel of Philip 82–84; cf. GS pp.351–52, NHS20 pp.206–9

Ignorance often masquerades as the truth. Hence, the writer of the *Testimony of Truth* points out that those who profess to be Christians, without true knowledge of the spiritual reality, are "giving themselves over to ignorance". If words alone, and a profession of faith could lead to salvation, the "whole world ... would be saved":

The foolish – thinking in their heart that if they confess, "We are Christians," in word only but not with power, while giving themselves over to ignorance, to human death, not knowing where they are going nor who Christ is, thinking that they will live, when (really) they are in error – (they) hasten towards the principalities and the authorities. They fall into their clutches because of the ignorance that is in them. For if words which bear testimony could bring about salvation on their own, the whole world would experience it and would be saved. But it is in this way that they draw error to themselves.

Testimony of Truth 31–32; cf. NHS15 pp.126–29

The same idea is expressed by Greek mystical writers, as in the Hermetic texts. The primary problem faced by the soul in this world, says one writer, is spiritual ignorance. As a result, the soul suffers the misfortunes of transmigration:

> The soul's vice is ignorance. For the soul who has no knowledge of the things that are, or knowledge of their nature, or of Good, is blinded by the body's passions and tossed about.
>
> This wretched soul, not knowing what she is, becomes the slave of bodies of strange form in sorry plight, bearing the body as a load – not as the ruler, but the ruled. This (ignorance) is the soul's vice.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum X:8; cf. TGH2 p.146*

Hence, the exhortation from the Hermetic literature:

> O people, earthborn folk, you who have given yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and ignorance of God, be sober now; cease from your surfeit; cease to be glamoured by irrational sleep!
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum I:27; cf. TGH2 p.17*

And again, where ignorance *(a-gnosis)* is contrasted with mystic knowledge of God *(gnosis):*

> O people, where are you rushing, so intoxicated and having so fully drunk the strong wine of ignorance unmixed? Indeed, you cannot hold it: already you are about to spew it up.
>
> Stay, be sober! Gaze upward with the eyes of the spirit – and if you cannot all do so, at least those of you who can! For the harm that comes from ignorance *(agnosis, lit.* lack of *gnosis)* is flooding the entire earth, overwhelming the soul along with the body that encloses it, preventing it from finding refuge in the harbours of salvation.
>
> Do not, then, be swept away by the main current, but availing yourself of the countercurrent, you who can, make for salvation's port, and harbouring there, look for one to take you by the hand, and take you through the gates of *gnosis,* where clear light shines, pure from all darkness; where not a single soul is intoxicated, but all are sober, fixing their eyes on that Being who wills to be seen – but spiritually, for that Being cannot be heard or told or seen by eyes, only by mind and spirit.
>
> But first, you must tear off the tunic (body) that you are wearing, the robe of ignorance, the foundation of imperfection, the chain of corruption, the carapace of darkness, the living death, the corpse made of the senses, the tomb you carry with you, the thief within your house, who through the things he loves, hates you; and through the things he hates, bears you malice.

> Such is the tunic, the enemy, that you wear, which strangles you and pulls you down towards itself, lest you should look up and, beholding the Beauty of Truth and the Good that dwells within it, you should come to hate its imperfection – having discovered the plot that it has hatched against you by rendering insensible your wits and seeming senses, by stopping them up with a mass of matter and filling them with loathsome desire, to keep you from hearing what you ought to hear and to keep you from seeing what you ought to see.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum VII:1–3; cf. GS p.462, TGH2 pp.120–21*

See also: **ajñāna**, **avidyā**.

1. *Matthew* 3:10.
2. *John* 8:32.

storm, stormy sea A storm consists of violent weather conditions of wind, rain, hail, snow, sand, thunder, lightning and so on. In mystic literature, this world of transient phenomena, forever agitated by the constant turbulence of the mind, with its innumerable passions, desires and problems has commonly been depicted as a storm, particularly at sea.

In Christian literature, metaphors associated with storms are generally related to the gospel stories where Jesus either walks upon the water to reach his disciples' boat and still the stormy sea,[1] or is awoken from slumber in the rear of their small boat to perform the same feat.[2] It seems likely, however, that these stories originated as literalizations of mystic imagery. Jesus stilled the stormy waters of the mind and senses – not the waves of the material sea. This suggestion is amply illustrated in the literature of early Christian times.

Among early references to the images encountered in these miracle stories is a comment in the New Testament letter attributed to James the brother of Jesus. He writes that if a person sincerely seeks understanding or guidance from within, then they will certainly receive it. But the mind must be calm and receptive, not wavering "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed":

> If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
>
> *James 1:5–6, KJV*

Matthew, too, would have had such an example in mind when he wrote the story of Peter's attempt to walk on the water. According to the story, Peter's faith wavers – when "he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid"[3] – and he begins to sink.

In the early Christian *Odes of Solomon,* clearly alluding to the miracle of walking on the water, the writer speaks of the turbulent waters of "mighty rivers" rather than those of a stormy sea. The essential imagery, however, remains the same. The poet says that the creative Power of the Lord is strong. Manifested in the illusion of the physical universe, it carries away everybody who does not walk with faith:

> Like mighty rivers are the Power of the Lord,
> which carry headlong those who reject Him –
> And twist their footsteps,
> and sweep away their crossings,
> and carry off their bodies,
> and corrupt their hearts.
> For swifter they are than lightning,
> and faster.
>
> But those who cross in faith
> shall not be shaken.
> And those who walk on them in purity,
> shall not be afraid.
> For the Sign of the Lord is on them.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 39:1–7*

Those who tread with "faith", says the odist, "shall not be shaken": they cross without disturbance of the mind and without creating further sin. They can do so because the "Sign of the Lord is on them" – the "Sign" being a metaphor used for mystic baptism into the Word or the Name. Hence, the poet continues:

> And the Sign becomes the Way
> for those who cross in the Name of the Lord.
> Be clothed, therefore, in the Name of the Most High,
> and know Him;
> And you will cross without danger,
> for the rivers will be subject to you.
> For the Lord (Messiah) has bridged them by his Word:
> he has walked over and crossed them on foot.
> And his footsteps remain upon the waters,
> and have not disappeared;

But are like a tree
  that is firmly fixed (*or* founded on Truth).
On this side and on that,
  the waves rise up;
But the footsteps of our Lord Messiah remain,
  and are neither obliterated nor effaced.

For a Way has been established
  for those who cross after him,
  and for those who follow in the footsteps of his faith,
  and who adore his Holy Name.

Odes of Solomon 39:7–13

The "Sign becomes the Way" across the turbulent waters. The "Lord (Messiah)" – probably Jesus, though it is never specified in these odes – made a bridge across them, a bridge of the Word. And the writer imagines a firm wooden walkway across the stormy waters, where each footstep of the Saviour is firmly "established … for those who follow in (his) footsteps" with faith and "adore his Holy Name" – the mystic Name, within.

The allusions to Jesus walking on the water are clearly being understood as a mystic metaphor, rather than literally. It is, however, among the Manichaean psalms, more than any other literature of the period, that the commonest use of 'stormy' metaphors is found, as in the petition:

Guide for me my spirit
  in the midst of the stormy sea.

Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.150

It is also the mystic Name or Word that is said to still the storms of the mind, agitated by physical existence:

In the midst of the sea, Jesus, guide me.
Do not abandon us that the waves may not overwhelm us.
When I utter your Name over the sea, it stills its waves.

Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.151

In another psalm, the psalmist speaks generally of life in this world and more specifically of the human passions. He likens the state of the soul to that of a ship tossed helplessly in a storm, slowly being broken apart by the force of the wind and waves. These storms, he says, are caused by the fury of the "demons, the banished princes", the powers within the realm of the devil:

All the demons, the banished princes,
transfixed me with fear, and dismayed me with anguish.
Their fury gathered, like a sea of fire.
The seething waves rose up that they might engulf me.

I am like [ships] which course over the heart of the ocean....
In every region gathered stormy winds and rain,
and the fume of all fogs, lightning and thunder,
and banked clouds of hail,
the crash and roar of all the waves of the sea.

The skiff rises up,
lifted on the crest of the wave,
and glides down into the trough, to be hidden within.
With all the beams [splintered]
and water [pouring] in on every side,
all the clamps become loosened by [the buffeting],
the iron rivets are plucked out by [the pounding].
The railings are all [broken off] by the immersion,
the masts are flung together in the turmoil,
the rudders have dropped off into the sea.
[Fear grips] those on board,
the helmsmen and all the pilots weep bitterly
and lament aloud.
There was terror and wreck before break of day.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān I:18–20, 22–30; cf. MHCP pp.116–19

Providing an insight into ancient ship-building techniques and the helplessness of small wooden sailing boats in a tempest at sea, the psalmist compares it to the state of the soul, tossed about in this world. Nothing can be relied upon; everything slowly breaks apart under the pressure of life's buffeting. The same idea is found in another of these psalms:

My soul weeps within,
and cries out at each distress and stab.
This carrion form (the body) is ended for me,
and the hour of life, with its turbulent days.
It was tossed and troubled as a sea with waves:
pain was heaped on pain, whereby they ravage my soul.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān I:11–13, MHCP pp.114–15

With these feelings, the soul naturally prays for deliverance from the storm, as in the Manichaean Chinese writings from Chinese Turkestan:

I now beseechingly pray and longingly request
that I may leave this poisonous fiery sea of my carnal body,
in which the uprising waves and boiling ripples
never stop for a moment.

Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.177:19

In another Manichaean hymn, this time from the Parthian, the Saviour responds:

Through perfect light I shall cleanse from you
all the filth and corrosion that you have passed through.
I shall deliver you from all the waves of the sea
and from its deep,
wherein you have gone through these drownings.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:44–45; cf. MHCP pp.144–47

Looking to the Coptic psalms, the devotee specifically equates the forgiveness of sins and the escape from iniquity with the stilling of the "waves of the sea":

Lo, all trees … have become new again.
Lo, the roses have spread their beauty abroad,
for the bond has been severed
that does harm to their leaves.
Do you also sever the chains and the bond of our sins.

The whole Air is luminous … today,
the earth too puts forth blossom also,
the waves of the sea are still:
For the gloomy winter, full of trouble, has passed.

Let us too escape from the iniquity of evil.
Forgive the sins of them that know your mystery,
to whom there has been revealed
the knowledge of the secret of the Most High
through the holy Wisdom, wherein there is no Error.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXII; cf. MPB p.8

Other mystics have also interpreted the 'stormy weather' stories in the Christian gospels as literalizations of mystic metaphors. From another time and culture, the nineteenth-century 'Ināyat Khān writes:

From a mystical point of view, the phenomenon of Christ's walking on the water suggests a great philosophy rather than just a phenomenon.

> The whole universe in all its forms is one single vision of a constant activity. From the beginning to end, every aspect of life represents motion, and it is the perpetual motion of the whole universe which is called life. Thus the universe is, so to speak, an ocean of life, and the great devotees have constantly prayed to be liberated, that they may not sink in this ocean, but may be able to swim in it; this they call *taran*. And it is the master spirit which can rise above these waves of the immense ocean of life, in which souls are generally drowned. To be in it, and yet to be able to stand above it and to walk on it, is the phenomenon of Christ's walking upon the water.
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.222*

See also: **bhav sāgar**.

1. *Mark* 6:47–51; *Matthew* 14:24–33.
2. *Mark* 4:35–40; *Luke* 8:22–25.
3. *Matthew* 14:30.

stranger A person to whom a locality or place is unknown or is not their home; mystically, a metaphor for the soul in this world. The true home of the soul being in the realm of eternity, the soul is a stranger in this world – it is in a country which is foreign to its nature. One of the Manichaean psalms, for instance, points out that the soul is a stranger living in an impure body:

> You have spent your life
> sunk in the worries and cares of the world,
> working yourself into a decline
> through its pains and sorrows.
> You are a stranger,
> housed in a body of the earth defiled:
> How long therefore have you been heedless
> of what you are ignorantly doing?
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXV; cf. MPB p.82*

The soul who begins to tread the homeward path actually begins to feel like a stranger. Even close relatives can sometimes feel like strangers, in the sense that they are treading such different paths through life. The Manichaean psalms have many references to this:

> I became a stranger to the parents of the flesh,
> my brothers, my kinsmen;
> For I found You – Father and Mother and Brother,

a God undying, with whom I dwelt in the light,
before I was joined with the darkness.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXVIII; cf. MPB p.86

And:

I am your sheep: you are my good Shepherd.
You came after me and saved me
from the destructive wolves.
I listened to your words, I walked in your laws,
I became a stranger in the world
for your Name's sake, my God.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCLI; cf. MPB p.60

And again:

O soul, O soul, be mindful of your *aeons,*
O soul, from where have you come?
Your Father seeks you, you are from on high,
your Shepherd searches for you.
You are a stranger to the world....
you are the sheep that wandered in the desert....
O soul, lift up your head,
and go to your native land.
You are a stranger to your kin.

Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB pp.181–82

In another, the psalmist says that it is the longing to see the radiant form of the Saviour within which creates this detachment from the world and has made him a "stranger" here:

Let me see your (radiant) Image, my holy Father,
which I saw before the world was created,
before the Darkness presumed
to stir up envy against your *aeons.*
Because of it (your Image),
I became a stranger to my (earthly) kingdom:
I severed its root, I went up victoriously on high.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXIII; cf. MPB p.80

The metaphor is not uncommon in other gnostic literature. One of the Mandaean poems, for instance, tells the story of the soul's descent from God ("Great Life") to the material world ("the abode of evil ones"). But by keeping herself vigilantly "alien" to the world, or detached from it, like a "stranger", she maintains a memory of her heavenly home:

Poor am I! …
And displaced am I, from far away am I!
A poor one whom the Great Life afflicted.
A displaced one, for the *'uthras* (pure beings) removed me:
  they brought me from the abode of the Good;
Yes, they assigned me a dwelling in the abode of evil ones;
Yes, they made me dwell in the abode of evil ones,
  which is all full of wickedness –
All full of evil, full of consuming fire.

I willed it not, nor do I desire
  to dwell in the futile dwelling (the body).
With my strength and with my vigilance
  have I dwelt in the futile abode.
By my vigilance and my praise
  have I kept myself alien from it, from the world.

I have stood among them like a fatherless child;
Like a fatherless child,
  or like a fruit tree with none to tend it.
I hear the voice of the Seven
  who murmur and confer together:
They say, "Whence is this being? This stranger,
  whose speech is not like our speech?"
I did not listen to their talk,
  and they were filled with evil rage against me.

Mandaean Prayer Book 165; cf. CPM pp.143–45

The "Seven" are the five planets plus the sun and moon, a metaphorical allusion to ancient Middle Eastern astrology and the forces of destiny. God then sends the soul a Saviour from the eternal realm – the "house of perfection" – who speaks compassionately to the soul, concluding:

I will bring you robes of splendour,
  which the world, covetous, will entreat;
I will bring to you wrappings, good and pure,
  of the Light which is great and boundless.
I will deliver you from the wicked,
  and save you from sinners….
In the pure place, I will rescue you!

Mandaean Prayer Book 165; cf. CPM p.145

It is in this way that the soul escapes from this world and returns to her real home.

See also: **alien**, **gharīb**, **wanderer**, **wayfarer**.

sukh(a) (S/Pa/H/Pu) *Lit.* pleasure, happiness, comfort, delight, joy, solace, ease, tranquillity, contentment, peace, rest, relief; said by Sanskrit grammarians to be derived from *su* (good, easy, well) + axle hole *(kha)*, thus 'running easily', 'fitting well'; more probably derived from *su* (good, easy, well) + *stha* (standing), thus 'standing easily'; a term often contrasted with its opposite *duḥkha*, meaning suffering and hardship. The term is used for both the pleasure and happiness of this world, as well as the peace and happiness of the highest spiritual state.

The mind, by nature, is a pleasure seeker. The mind of every creature seeks out what seems like comfort, security and pleasure. Pleasure, however, is only one side of the coin. It exists only by virtue of its opposite – pain, trouble, discomfort or difficulty. In fact, pleasure can only be known by contrast with its opposite.

Nothing in life is permanent. As a result, pleasures and pains are both short-lived. The one can change to the other very rapidly. In fact, the one is a consequence, even a necessary companion, of the other. When a period of pleasure ceases, discomfort is felt all the more acutely. Moreover, the tendencies, desires, thoughts and actions of one life have to be accounted for after death and in future lives. The world is thus an arena of cause and effect, and nothing goes by unaccounted or unaccountable.

Mystics therefore point out that this world is a play of happiness *(sukh)* and suffering *(dukh)*. They suggest and advise that a soul should seek to find the way out, to seek that which lies beyond the transitory dance of the mind and the senses.

Pleasure and pain arise in the mind because the mind identifies with the objects and sensations of the world. In fact everything, both within and without, is a manifestation of the Lord and does not belong to any individual. Even the sense of identity and ego is illusory and false. The highest happiness – divine bliss – can only be experienced by shedding the false sense of self, and rising above the pairs of opposites. Hence, Bābā Jaimal Singh wrote to his disciple Mahārāj Sāwan Singh:

> You should never think of anything as your own because everything belongs to *Akāl Purush Anāmī Rādhā Swāmī.* The body, life, sons, daughters, wife, parents, wealth, house, property, all belong to Him. All this should be given back to Him. Do not keep your 'self' in anything. When you have rendered everything to God, then everything is He and you are also He. Render everything to Him. Then you attend to your worldly work, also to *bhajan* and *simran* (meditation), but always feel in your mind that 'I' am not doing anything. 'I' simply

am not. Whatever *sukh* or *dukh* (pleasure or pain) comes, accept it cheerfully. Always realize that "the *Satguru* is everything. 'I' am nothing. 'I' am not. Thou art. Thou alone art."

Bābā Jaimal Singh, Spiritual Letters 5, SLO p.20

The same detachment was counselled by the Buddha:

The virtuous become detached from everything;
The saintly hold no converse with sensual pleasures;
The wise are not affected,
  whether touched by happiness *(sukha)* or sorrow *(dukkha)*.

Dhammapada 6:8

Mystics observe that the relative happiness of this world can be achieved by living correctly. Though not the supreme goal, a person needs to be happy and in harmony with life in order to be able to meditate. In the sayings attributed to the Buddha in the *Dhammapada,* the Buddha says that happiness in this world arises simply from kind and considerate behaviour:

Should a person do what is good,
  let him repeat it again and again;
He should find pleasure in it,
  for the result of good conduct is happiness *(sukha)*.

Dhammapada 9:3

To him who habitually honours and respects the aged,
  four blessings will accrue:
Long life, beauty, strength and happiness *(sukha)*.

Dhammapada 8:10

He also gives an extended exhortation on the value of living happily:

Let us live with happiness *(sukha)*,
  without hatred among those who hate.
Among the hateful, let us dwell hate-free....

Let us live with happiness *(sukha)*,
  free from care among the careworn;
Among the careworn, let us dwell carefree.

Let us live with happiness *(sukha)*,
  we who possess nothing;
Like the radiant gods, let us feed on happiness *(sukha)*.

Victory breeds hatred,
for the defeated dwell in suffering *(dukkha).*
He who has given up victory and defeat,
is calm and lives in happiness *(sukha).*

There is no fire like lust,
no ill like hatred;
There is no suffering *(dukkha)* like bodily existence,
no happiness *(sukha)* higher than peace.

Desire is the greatest disease,
impressions *(sankhāras)* are the greatest ill *(dukkha).*
To he who truly understands this,
nibbāna (nirvāṇa) is the highest happiness *(sukha).*

Health is the greatest gift,
contentment is the greatest wealth;
The trustworthy are the best relations,
nibbāna (nirvāṇa) is the highest happiness *(sukha).*

Dhammapada 15:1, 3–8

The Buddha also says that a person who tries to achieve happiness in life at the expense of others who are also seeking happiness, will find no happiness after death:

He who, seeking his own happiness *(sukha),*
gives pain to other beings also desiring happiness *(sukha),*
obtains no happiness *(sukha)* after death.

He who, seeking his own happiness *(sukha),*
gives no pain to other beings also desiring happiness *(sukha),*
obtains happiness *(sukha)* after death.

Dhammapada 10:3–4

Happiness, he summarizes, is derived from following the spiritual path:

Happiness *(sukha)* is virtue lasting until old age;
Happiness *(sukha)* is unfaltering faith;
Happiness *(sukha)* is the attainment of wisdom;
Happiness *(sukha)* is doing no evil *(pāpa).*

Dhammapada 23:14

This pursuit of *sukha* or worldly happiness and pleasure is recognized in *Vedānta* as the purpose behind all acts of living. It is also recognized that

unalloyed happiness comes only when the individual soul merges with the Universal Soul. This union is called *ānanda,* translated as undiluted bliss or joy. There is no pure and eternal joy within the cycle of births and deaths. Understanding *sukha* as this highest pleasure or bliss, the *Bhagavad Gītā* says:

> That *yogī* who enjoys inner happiness *(sukha),*
> who knows inner delight,
> and who likewise experiences the inner light –
> He realizes himself to be *Brahman,*
> and knows the beatitude *(nirvāṇa)* of *Brahman.*
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 5:24*

The Buddha also said:

> A *bhikkhu* (monk) who is full of joy,
> having full faith in the Buddha's teaching,
> will reach a place of peace,
> the end of conditioned existence, and bliss *(sukha).*
>
> *Dhammapada 25:22*

Conversely, Guru Nānak writes that the soul bereft of God can find no "peace":

> Accursed is the life of the discarded bride,
> as she is deluded by another's love.
> Like the wall containing calcareous matter, day and night,
> she continues crumbling, and finally falls down.
> Without the Name (*Shabd,* Word), peace *(sukh)* ensues not,
> without the Beloved, grief *(dukh)* does not depart.
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 18, MMS*

The mind is essentially a pleasure seeker. It will only give up the pleasure and happiness of this world when it gets a taste of the higher happiness. It is to this higher happiness that the Buddha is referring when he says:

> If, by giving up a lesser pleasure *(sukha),*
> one can behold a greater pleasure *(sukha),*
> a wise man will give up the lesser pleasure *(sukha),*
> in favour of the greater pleasure *(sukha).*
>
> *Dhammapada 21:1*

See also: **duḥkha**.

svapn(a) (S/H), **supnā**, **supan** (H/Pu) *Lit.* dream, as experienced during sleep; metaphorically, this world, suggesting its illusory and deceptive nature. Likening the existence of the soul in this world to the dream state *(svapnayā),* the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* says that just as a man may become a king in his dreams, so too does the self or soul become a king in the "kingdom" of the body. It is, however, just another dream:

When it (the self) remains in the dream state *(svapnayā),*
this is the outcome:
It becomes a great king, seemingly,
or a great *brāhmaṇ,* seemingly,
or attains high or low states, seemingly.
Even as a great king, taking with him his (retinue of) citizens,
moves about at will in his own kingdom,
so does it (the self), taking with it the senses,
move about at will in the body.

Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:1.18

Many mystics have made the same comparison. Dariyā Sāhib, referring to the soul which once used to perch on the indestructible Tree of *Nām,* says:

What happiness is there in this village of the dead,
where you have to die and take birth, again and again.
If the true Name, the indestructible Tree, is not realized,
you will only pursue worldly pleasures,
which are like a dream *(supan)* in the night.

Dariyā Sāhib, Gyān Svarodaya, Chaupaī 78–79, DG2 p.254; cf. DSSB pp.131–32

Guru Tegh Bahādur says it simply:

As is a dream *(supnā)* and a show,
so know thou this world *(saṃsār)* to be:
Nānak, without the Lord, nothing is true in these.

Guru Tegh Bahādur, Ādi Granth 1427, MMS

Likewise, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh advises against becoming entangled in the dream of this world:

Do not get entangled in this world:
it is only a dream *(svapna)* in the night, no more.
Your body and your home are both false:
why wander in illusion?

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:13.2–3, SBP p.121

See also: **avasthā** (▸2), **dream**, **jāgnā**, **sleep**.

tamāshā (H/Pu), **tamāsā** (Pu) *Lit.* entertainment, exhibition, show, spectacle, amusement, pastime; metaphorically, this world, regarded by mystics as a show which has no stability, substance or reality. Guru Arjun says:

> Where, in midst of millions of plays and entertainments *(tamāsā)*,
> God's Name is not contemplated –
> O Nānak, that place is a wilderness, and equal to the lepers' hell.
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 707, MMS*

Likewise, the author of the *Dasam Granth*, one of the Sikh texts, says:

> I am the servant of the supreme Lord,
> come to watch this worldly spectacle *(tamāsā)*.
>
> *Dasam Granth 1, Bachitar Natak, Chaupaī 33, p.57*

Tulsī Sāhib uses the term for the show of creation on the inner planes:

> Cleanse the chamber of your heart
> for the coming of your Beloved.
> Discard from your attention all that is other,
> so that He may be seated there.
> Look with the eye of the mind,
> and see the show *(tamāsā)* going on.
> There are such enchanting scenes
> to captivate your heart.
> Your heart is one, but its desires are many,
> and many more are its cravings.
> Where is the room for the Lord to be seated?
>
> *Tulsī Sāhib, in Santon kī Bānī, Ghazal vv.1–3, SKB p.303*

See also: **līlā**.

tarkīb (A/P) *Lit.* compoundness, composition; a composition of many incongruous parts; the converse of unity, simplicity and purity; mystically, this world of change and diversity. Rūmī says that this world is narrow because of its diverse composition and multiplicity:

> The cause of narrowness
> is compoundness *(tarkīb)* and multiplicity:

> The senses are moving towards compoundness *(tarkīb).*
> Know that the world of unification *('ālam-i tawḥīd)*
> lies beyond sense:
> If you seek Unity, march in that direction.
> The divine Command "*Kun* (Be)!" was a single act,
> and the (two letters) N and K occurred only in speech,
> while the essence remained pure.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3098–100; cf. MJR2 p.169*

tempest See **storm**.

timir (H), **timar** (Pu) *Lit.* darkness, obscurity; metaphorically, the spiritual darkness of souls inhabiting the physical universe. Guru Rāmdās says that the "darkness of ignorance" is dispelled by the "collyrium" or eye lotion of the *Guru:*

> My Master, make me meet the divine true *Guru,* the divine true *Guru:*
> the divine *Satguru*'s feet are pleasing unto me.
> Applying the eye salve of divine knowledge *(gyān),*
> the *Guru* has dispelled the darkness *(timar)* of my ignorance *(agyān).*
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 573, MMS*

And Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh writes that the "light" of *Rādhā Swāmī* (God, *lit.* Lord of the Soul) lifted his inner "darkness":

> The night ended, darkness *(timir)* was banished
> by the light of my beloved *Rādhā Swāmī.*
>
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:1.100, SBP p.13*

See also: **darkness**.

tomb A place used for the burial of a corpse, especially a vault below ground level; metaphorically, the physical body in which the soul is entombed, cut off from the inner source of life and light. In the *Teachings of Silvanus,* for instance, the writer contrasts the real heritage of the human form – that of being a temple of God – with the condition of most people:

> You were a temple, but you have made yourself a tomb. Cease being a tomb, and become again a temple, so that uprightness and divinity may be restored to you.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 106; cf. NHS30 pp.334–35*

Similarly, in the *Second Apocalypse of James,* James petitions Jesus to be brought out "alive" from the "tomb" of the body, the domain of "sin", the "Enemy" or the "Judge":

> Save me from an evil death!
> Bring me from a tomb alive....
> Save me from sinful flesh,
> because I trusted in you with all my strength!
> Because you are the life of the life,
> save me from a humiliating Enemy!
> Do not give me into the hand of a Judge
> who is severe with sin!
>
> *Second Apocalypse of James 63, NHS11 pp.146–47*

The "Enemy" or the "Judge who is severe with sin" is the devil, the gnostic Demiurge, the negative power.

That this metaphor is actually an ancient one is testified by an extract from the early Pythagorean, Philolaus, of the fifth century BCE, quoted by the second-century Christian teacher, Clement of Alexandria:

> The theologians and prophets of old testify that the soul has been joined to the body as a punishment, and that it is buried in it as though in a tomb.
>
> *Philolaus, in Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies III:17; cf. EGP p.222*

See also: **death, dying while living** (▸2), **grave, resurrection** (▸2).

valley, valley of the shadow of death, valley of the weeper, valleys of Sheol
A valley is an elongated depression in the surface of the earth, often with a stream or river running along the bottom, and caused by erosion or movements of the earth's crust. Just as the mountains were seen as representing the inner regions or even the eternal realm of God Himself, so too did the "valley" represent the physical world. Its most well-known occurrence must be in the twenty-third psalm:

> Yea, though I walk through
> the valley of the shadow of death,
> I will fear no evil.
>
> *Psalm 23:4, KJV*

The same simile is found in psalm eighty-four, which speaks of those who live all day in the love of God. "They go through the valley of the weeper" – this world – "clothed in (the) blessings" of God:

Happy those who live in Your house,
  and can praise You all day long;
And happy the pilgrims inspired by You
  with courage to make the ascents!

As they go through the valley of the weeper,
  they make it a place of springs,
  clothed in blessings by early rains.
Thence, they make their way from height to height,
  soon to be seen before God on Zion.

Psalm 84:4–7, JB

Proverbs also speaks of the "valleys", this time "of *Sheol*", which refer both to this world as well as to the hellish zones to which the evil-minded may be drawn after death, according to the already hellish tendencies of their own minds. In this excerpt, illusion or spiritual ignorance is parodied as an old woman, "Dame Folly", whose "guests are heading for the valleys of *Sheol*":

Dame Folly acts on impulse,
  is childish and knows nothing.
She sits at the door of her house,
  on a throne commanding the city,
  inviting the passers-by
  as they pass on their lawful occasions,
"Who is ignorant? Let him step this way."

To the fool she says,
  "Stolen waters are sweet,
  and bread tastes better when eaten in secret."

The fellow does not realize
  that here the Shades are gathered,
  that her guests are heading for the valleys of *Sheol.*

Proverbs 9:13–18, JB

In the Manichaean writings, this world is again referred to as a "dark valley" and a "hellish place". Speaking rhetorically, the devotee is begging for someone to release him from the realm of birth and death:

Who will willingly save me from the pit of destruction,
  and from the dark valley where all is harshness? …

Not all the lusts and the comfort of wealth
 will help them in that hellish place.
Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān V:1–10, MHCP pp.86–87

See also: **desert**.

wanderer A person who moves about or travels, commonly with no definite purpose or destination; a wayfarer, a nomad, a vagabond, a stranger and so on; metaphorically, the soul in this world, who wanders from place to place, never finding a permanent home. The guides of those who wander are the Saviours. Hence, one of the Manichaean psalms describes Jesus as:

Jesus, Physician of the wounded,
 Redeemer of living souls,
 Path which the wanderers seek,
 Door of the Treasure of Life.
Manichaean Psalm Book CCXIX; cf. MPB p.2

Likewise, in one of the apocryphal Christian texts, the apostle Matthew portrays Jesus as using a number of terms which refer to the Creative Word, including the "Guide of wanderers":

O God of the sinners who repent!
Who turns erring souls to the knowledge of Himself,
 Purifier of souls and of bodies together,
 the Word which came down from heaven,
 the *manna* which fell from the sky in the desert,
 the loud Voice which resounded over all,
 the Guide of wanderers,
 the Ladder which reaches to the Sky,
 the Food which the children of Israel ate in the wilderness.
Acts of Matthew; cf. MAA p.106

The same imagery is found in the biblical *Song of Songs* where the lover expresses her desire to be alone with the Beloved on the inner planes, rather than being constantly surrounded by a crowd of other disciples. Addressing her Beloved, she begs to be taken out of the burning heat of this world, the noonday sun, to rest in the inner pastures where he grazes his flock:

Tell me then, you whom my heart loves:
 where will you lead your flock to graze,
Where will you rest it at noon?

> That I may no more wander like a vagabond
> beside the flocks of your companions.
>
> *Song of Songs 1:7, JB*

See also: **alien, stranger, wayfarer**.

waves See **storm**.

wayfarer A person who goes on a journey, a traveller; a metaphor for the soul in this world, who is only a traveller through life, having no permanent dwelling here. Hence, the unknown writer of the early Christian *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle* advises:

> As wayfarers and sojourners, who tarry for a night and return early to the their homes, so may you consider yourselves concerning this world, that from here you go forth to the places where the Son went to prepare for every one worthy of them.
>
> *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle; cf. DAA pp.42–43*

And as Jesus describes himself in the *Acts of John:*

> A Lamp am I to you who behold me.
> A Mirror am I to you who perceive me.
> A Door am I to you who knock upon me.
> A Way am I to you a wayfarer.
>
> *Acts of John 95; cf. ANT p.258*

See also: **alien, stranger, wanderer**.

weeping and gnashing of teeth Suffering; an expression stemming from the Jewish custom of 'weeping and wailing' at times of ritual mourning and ritual repentance, often in conjunction with the tearing of clothes, the wearing of sackcloth, and the smearing of the body with ashes. "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" appears in the Christian gospels, where it is attributed to Jesus and refers metaphorically to the suffering and misery either of this world or of hell, or both. The term is a favourite of the (probably Jewish) compiler of the gospel attributed to Matthew where it occurs six times, as opposed to once in Luke's gospel, and not at all in Mark and John.[1] It is unsure, therefore, whether the expression was really used by Jesus or has been inserted by the compiler of Matthew's gospel.

In the parable of the servants, for example, who were given some capital, symbolizing their human life, the servant who simply buried his capital, and made no use of it, is "cast ... into outer darkness", which is clearly a place of suffering:

> Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness:
> there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
>
> *Matthew 25:30, KJV*

There is some uncertainty over the meaning of "outer darkness". Some early commentators presumed it to mean hell; others thought it related to this world.

See also: **outer darkness** (4.1).

1. *Matthew* 8:12, 13:42,50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30; *Luke* 13:28.

wilderness See **desert**.

wind See **pneuma** (3.1), **spirit** (5.1), **storm**, **wind** (3.1).

world(s) of darkness A Mandaean term which includes both this world and the nether worlds. In one poem, the soul is praised for leaving this "world of darkness", governed by the "planets", meaning that it is a world in which destiny and unavoidable troubles rule:

> Hail to you, hail to you,
> soul that has departed from the world!
> Leave corruption and the stinking body
> in which you have been:
> Its abode, the abode of the wicked,
> the place which is all sinning,
> the world of darkness, of hatred, jealousy and dissensions;
> The abode in which the planets go about,
> bringing pains and blemishes;
> Pains they bring, and blemishes,
> every day causing them tribulation.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 94; cf. CPM p.97*

In another poem, the *'uthras* (pure beings) and other celestial beings go to

see the soul of one who has ascended from this world to the celestial worlds of light:

And *Adatan* and *Yadatan* … will hymn you, saying to you,
"Your raiment shines and your appearance is honoured
in the house of your Father, the Lord of Greatness.
Your fame and your perfume will pervade
three hundred and sixty worlds of light."

And all the *'uthras* of the world of light will assemble,
take one another by the hand, and will say:
"Arise! We will go and see the man who has freed himself,
and ascended from worlds of darkness,
from among them who harbour evil plots."

Mandaean Prayer Book 379, CPM pp.302–3

See also: **abode of darkness, darkness, worlds of light** (4.1).

wound(s) An injury to a living organism; mystically, the wounds of sin and human weakness that hurt and hamper the soul, keeping it in the realm of birth and death. In the Manichaean hymns in Parthian, for instance, the writer describes Jesus as the life-giving Healer who raises souls from the death caused by "the wounds … of greed and lust":

Blessed and praised be Jesus, the vivifier,
the new *aeon,* the true Raiser of the dead,
who indeed is the Mother giving life to those
who have died from the wounds and lesions
of greed (desire) and lust,
and the Healer of those who have become unconscious
through the illness of the body of death.

Manichaean Hymns, MBB p.18ff.; cf. ML p.65

In the Manichaean psalms in Coptic, using similar language, the psalmist addresses the soul:

The light has shone forth for you;
O you that sleep in hell (this world) …
drink the Water of Memory, cast away oblivion.
He that is wounded and desires healing:
let him come to the Physician.

Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVIII; cf. MPB p.57

In another psalm, praying for help from the divine Physician, the soul asks to be healed of this "wound of lawlessness" – from being 'outside' the divine Law or Word:

> O Physician who has the Medicines of Life:
> heal me of the grievous wound of lawlessness.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.152*

Likewise, in the *Acts of Thomas*, Judas Thomas praises Jesus:

> To you be praise, the Son, the Peacemaker,
> who has healed our wounds,
> and persuaded our hardness of heart,
> and collected our wandering,
> and made us walk in your Truth:
> Through you we have known your Father.
>
> *Acts of Thomas VIII; cf. AAA p.248*

ẓalmavet, ereẓ ẓalmavet *Lit.* shadow *(ẓal)* of death *(mavet);* land *(ereẓ)* of the shadow of death *(ẓalmavet);* terms referring to the spectre of death and the land where death is always a threat; mystically, the material world, where everything is destined to die or to change; contrasted with Spirit which is eternal and a place of light. Probably referring to the coming of a Messiah who releases souls from the yoke of darkness, Isaiah says:

> The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
> They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death *(ereẓ ẓalmavet),*
> upon them has the light shone.
>
> *Isaiah 9:1, KB*

See also: **shadow**, **valley**.

ẓulmah (A), **ẓulmat** (P) *Lit.* darkness; metaphorically, the absence of spiritual light; the condition of souls in this world.

See also: **darkness**, **pardah-'i ẓulmat** (4.1).

6.3 Reincarnation, Destiny, and the Law of Cause and Effect

Mystics of all religious backgrounds have spoken of the soul's existence in this world as that of an exile from God. Likewise, they have described the soul as being confined in the physical body like a corpse in a tomb. A great many mystics have also taught reincarnation and transmigration of the soul into lower forms.

This teaching is naturally linked to both the essential immortality of the soul and the law of recompense by which everything is accounted for and governed. Indian mystics have called this principle *'karma'*, but the idea that man has to pay for his actions (in one way or another) is not only a part of every religion, but is also an intuitive feeling common to many human beings, whether or not they are of a religious disposition.

The mystics of ancient Greece, the Buddhists, the Christian gnostics, the Manichaeans, the Jewish Kabbalists, together with the yogis and Saints of India, have all said that the immortal soul is cast into body after body, lower species as well as human, under the influence of the individual's own lower nature. By the law of action and reaction, the deeds and desires of past lives are the seeds that bear fruit in future lives, determining its destiny. Helpless, the immortal soul is drawn repeatedly into the sphere of mortality by its own past thoughts and actions.

In many traditions, man's lower tendency is simply referred to as his carnal soul, his lower nature, his material desires and so on. Indian mystical philosophy, however, makes a useful distinction by identifying this lower nature as the mind (the *manas* or *man*). They go on to point out that the means by which every deed and desire sooner or later bears fruit is through hidden aspects of the mind, working on the higher (astral and causal) planes. This hidden mind may be called the greater mind. This greater mind, which is a creation of God and under His dominion, is a vast all-encompassing mind that controls and integrates everything within its sphere. The individual minds of individual creatures are only tiny parts of its complex web. All activity and diversity in the physical, astral and causal worlds are aspects of and governed by this greater mind. Absolutely nothing, say the mystics, is a matter of chance.

Mystics teach that actions and thoughts all have an effect, not only immediately, but also at a later date. Every act and every thought (especially desires and actions seeking particular self-oriented results) leave impressions on the individual mind. This storehouse of impressions finds an exact fulfilment by creating the fabric of future lives, for all individual minds are linked as parts of the greater mind. The greater mind is like a colossal multilevel, ultradynamic megacomputer, able to sort all the data and automatically create a world in which everything is taken into account, for each and every individual soul. No energy is wasted. Everything has a result of some sort, greater or lesser, according to the mental impressions and the *karma* created. This also means that the overall pattern of life is destined. From a higher point of view, there is very little room for the operation of free will.

Birth, death, rebirth, transmigration, the law of cause and effect, and bondage to this world are the topics covered in this section of terms.

KEY ENTRIES: **chaurāsī, karma, reincarnation**.

ādi karma (H) *Lit.* original, primal or first *(ādi) karma;* that *karma* which is not acquired by the individual but which was given to the soul by the Creator, in the beginning, in order that it would come into contact with the spiritual, mental and physical creation. The term seems to make its first appearance in *The Path of the Masters,* first published in 1939:

> Now the soul, equipped with this necessary handicap, begins its career in regions of mind and matter. At that moment it begins to accumulate *karma.* Before that it had no *karma,* except that which the Eastern wisdom calls *ādi karma.* This is the primal *karma,* and it consists of the action of the creative force, the real *Shabd,* whose function it is to bring souls to the material planes in order that they may begin to accumulate experience.
>
> *Julian Johnson, The Path of the Masters, POM p.273*

It is *ādi karma,* together with the creative Power, which has resulted in the gradual descent of the pure spiritual soul into the lower regions, in the course of which it has become enveloped with the instruments of the greater mind (the astral and causal bodies and minds), the individual mind, and the physical body, these being necessary vehicles for the exploration and experience of the creation.

Ādi karma creates in the soul that primary tendency which leads to the acquisition of individual *karma.* It was in this way that the fate of the soul as an individual began, leading to existence within the law of *karma,* under the sway of the mind, binding the soul ever more tightly to the creation, as it becomes inescapably lost in the cycle of birth and rebirth.

The Masters say little about the reasons why the Creator has furnished souls with this *ādi karma,* or why He decided to create this creation. At most, they say that the Lord wished to play the game of love with Himself or He wanted to worship Himself through His created souls. They point out that the real answer to this question can never be understood by the intellect. It can only be comprehended by raising the level of consciousness to the level of the Lord Himself, where everything becomes clear. In a sense, *ādi karma* is only a way of trying to explain one of the paradoxes of mysticism: that souls, who were presumably content with God, went out into the creation. Since they had no will of their own, it must be presumed that they did so by the will of God.

Theologians of different religions have all struggled to explain how man – or the soul – should have fallen into a state of sin. By way of explanation, Judaism and Christianity refer to the *Genesis* story of Adam and Eve, though there are differences of opinion as to how the story should be interpreted. Christianity speaks of original sin, a tendency which is inherent in man and with which he is born. But the concept has been variously understood and

interpreted over the centuries. A similar idea is present in the *Qur'ān* where God 'promises' the souls that He will come to this world to take them back to Himself. The Indian Sufi, Bulleh Shāh, refers to this passage with the longing of a devotee when he says:

With the souls You made a false promise:
"You go and I shall soon follow you."
But what a screen You have created,
  and how I wander about, lost in delusion!
Bulleh Shāh, Kullīyāt 132, KBS p.284, SBSU p.412; cf. BS p.249

See also: **shevirat ha-kelim** (5.2).

ajyāitī (Av) *Lit.* not life, death; used by Zarathushtra in his *Gāthās*, where it is contrasted with *gaya* (life). He says that the negative and positive powers or spirits *(mainyu)* in creation have created – between them – life *(gaya)* and death *(ajyāitī)*, thereby making creation possible and permitting its purpose to be achieved:

And when together these two *mainyu*
  did foregather at creation's early dawn,
  one made life *(gaya)*, the other, death *(ajyāitī)*;
And thus creation's purpose is achieved:
Darkness of mind for the followers of Untruth *(dregvānts)*,
  brightness of mind for the followers of Truth *(ashāvants)*.
Zarathushtra, Yasna 30:4; cf. DSZ p.140

See also: **Ahriman** (6.1).

amukta (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* not *(a)* liberated *(mukta)*; unliberated; captive, in bondage; the soul's condition in this world.

See also: **mukti** (▸2).

aṇḍaj(a) (S/H) *Lit.* born *(ja)* from an egg *(aṇḍa)*. In their descriptions of the creation, Indian mystics have classified living creatures into four main categories. *Aṇḍaja* are those creatures which are born from eggs (birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, etc.).

See **chār khāni**.

āvāgaman (H/Pu), **āvāgavan**, **āvaṇ jāṇā**, **āveh jāveh** (Pu) *Lit.* coming *(āwā, āvaṇ, āveh)* + going *(gāman, jāṇā, jāveh);* hence, birth and death, referring especially to the seemingly endless cycle of birth and death. Under the influence of the mind and deceived by *māyā* (illusion), the souls in this world endlessly reincarnate in one form or another. This has been taught by many Indian mystics:

> The primordial Lord *(Ādi Purakh)* Himself creates the creation:
> the mortals and lower beings are engrossed in the love of *māyā*.
> Being in love with another, they are attached with the world:
> the unfortunate ones die, and continue coming and going *(āveh jāveh)*.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 842, MMS*

> Every day of the week
> creatures are born and die.
> Devote yourself to the Lord,
> and your coming and going *(āvāgavan)* will end.
>
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Sāt Vār Nirṇay 7:9–10, SBB p.47*

See also: **chaurāsī**, **karma**.

azmān arba' (A/P) *Lit.* four *(arba')* times *(azmān);* in Islamic thought, four times during pregnancy are considered particularly influential in forming character and destiny:

1. The time of conception.
2. When the face appears on the embryo.
3. When life is joined to the child at three months; up until this time the soul comes and goes.
4. The time of birth.

For example, according to Nasafī, if all four times are auspicious for knowledge and intelligence, and the individual makes considerable effort in that direction, he will become a very knowledgeable person. Similarly, if they indicate wealth, and he makes the same effort, circumstances will help him become extremely wealthy. But the converse is also true, and if the four times are not auspicious, a person may never be able to achieve personal education or wealth, even if he is born in an educated or wealthy family. It is also very rare for all four times to point to the same thing. And due to the different degree of effort exerted by individuals, there is also a difference between a person's potential, and what they actually achieve.[1]

1.Nasafī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil, IK* p.209.

bandhan(a) (S/H/Pu), **bandhanī** (Pu) *Lit.* fetter, bond, chain, tie, noose; bondage, captivity, entanglements; mystically, the bondage of this world, the bondage of *karma,* as contrasted with *moksha* (liberation). By taking birth in this world, according to his previous actions and desires, an individual is forced to act once again. In the process, he is automatically bound to the results of those actions. He is thus held in tight bondage to the objects of the physical realm, and by his own efforts he cannot escape. So closely and tightly is he held to the grindstone of physical existence that he is usually quite unaware that life has anything else to offer except the struggle to exist. Mystically, *bandhan* or *karma bandhan* (the bondage of *karma*) implies that man is held by the bonds or chains of his actions or *karma,* and has no free will. Guru Nānak writes:

> Entanglements *(bandhan)* are mother, father and the world;
> Entanglements *(bandhan)* are sons, daughters and wife;
> Entanglements *(bandhan)* are religious ceremonies,
> performed through pride;
> Entanglements *(bandhan)* are the sons, wife,
> and another's love in the mind;
> Entanglement *(bandhan)* is the cultivation done by the cultivators;
> For his ego, man suffers punishment
> and the king demands penalty (taxes) from him.
> Entanglement *(bandhan)* is trade (business)
> without God's meditation;
> The mortal is not satisfied
> with the extension of *māyā* (illusion).
> Entanglement *(bandhan)* is the perishable wealth,
> which the bankers amass:
> Without God's meditation,
> the mortal becomes not acceptable;
> Entanglements *(bandhan)* are *Vedas,* religious discussions and pride;
> By the entanglements *(bandhan)* of worldly love and sins,
> the man perishes.
> Nānak has sought the protection of the Lord's Name *(Rām Nām):*
> he whom the true *Guru* saves suffers no entanglement *(bandh).*
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 416, MMS*

He also adds that all actions, good and bad, lead to rebirth:

> Hope and desire are entanglements *(bandhanī),* O brother,
> and rituals and religious ceremonies are the entrappers *(bandhkārī).*

As a result of bad deeds *(karam)* and good acts *(dharam),*
the mortal is born in the world:
Forgetting the Name, he is ruined, O brother.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 635, MMS

Hope and desire are entanglements *(bandhanī),* O brother,
and rituals and religious ceremonies are the entrappers *(bandhkārī).*
As a result of bad deeds *(karam)* and good acts *(dharam),*
the mortal is born in the world:
Forgetting the Name, he is ruined, O brother.
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 635, MMS

See also: **bandīvān, captives.**

bandīvān, bandīkhānā (H) *Lit.* prisoner, captive, slave; mystically, the state of souls in this world, imprisoned here by their body, mind and associated *karma:*

Dādū is a captive *(bandīvān):*
You are the officer who can liberate him.
O my merciful Lord,
why do You keep me in prison?
Dādū, in Sant Bānī Sangrah 1, Binay 4, SBS1 p.81

In the economy of the Lord's creation, the permanent residents of the inner realms are also 'prisoners' of those realms, and are usually unable to proceed higher or lower to any great extent. Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh has thus described the souls who live in *mahā sunn,* a realm of great darkness between *bhanwar guphā* (*lit.* rotating cave) and *daswān dwār* (*lit.* tenth door), as *bandīkhānā:*

This is the region of *mahā sunn.*
There are four secret areas here,
which no Saint has ever described.
Countless souls, exiled from the true court of the Lord,
dwell there like captives *(bandīkhānā)* in prison cells.
Though they experience no pain or suffering
and go on attending to the duties allotted to them,
they are deprived of the vision of the Lord,
and are thus in a state of acute restlessness
(due to divine longing).
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry, Bachan 21, Hidāyat Nāmā, SBP p.175

See also: **bandhan**, **captives**.

bāsnā (Pu) See **vāsanā**.

bhāg(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* fortune, destiny, portion, share; the fate or *prārabdh karma* with which a person is born due to the actions, thoughts and desires of past lives; often used to mean the good fortune of receiving the grace of God; commonly used by Indian mystics and devotees, as in:

> Marvellous has been my good fortune *(bhāg)* today: …
> the vision of the Lord of the Soul *(Rādhā Swāmī)*
> has brought peace to my mind.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 4:2.3, SBP p.37*

And:

> It is my good fortune *(bhāg)* to have met the saintly *Guru:*
> the immortal Lord, I have found in my own home.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 97, MMS*

See also: **karma**.

bhog(a) bhūmi (S/H/Pu), **bhog bhūmī** (Pu) *Lit.* land, place or field *(bhūmi, bhūmī)* of fruition *(bhog);* the place where the fruits of past *karma,* good or bad, are experienced as pleasure and pain; thus, the physical universe, as well as heaven and hell. *Bhog* implies either enjoyment or suffering, depending on the context.

In Jainism, *bhog bhūmi* is a heavenly realm where no action *(karma)* is needed. The gratification of all needs and the pleasure of the finest foods are met by the mythological, wish-fulfilling *Kalpavṛiksha* (*Kalpa* tree) that grows in heaven.

See also: **bhog yoni**, **karma bhūmi**, **karma yoni**.

bhog(a) yoni (S/H), **bhog jūnī** (Pu) *Lit.* birth *(yoni)* of fruition *(bhog);* a birth or species in which the soul experiences the fruit of its past actions *(karma),* good or bad, as pleasure or pain; by implication, a birth in a physical form lower than the human. Souls in lower physical forms reap the fruit of their actions in previous human lives, unless they have been placed there to

populate that region. They do not create more *karma* while in those forms. Life forms in heaven and hell are also *bhog yonis.*

Bhog yoni refers to the birth or body in which *karma* is experienced. *Bhog bhūmi* (land of fruition) refers to the environment or arena in which the body is placed in order to reap the fruit of *karma. Bhog* implies either enjoyment or suffering, depending on the context.

Bhog yoni and *bhog bhūmi* are contrasted with *karma yoni* and *karma bhūmi,* which refer to the birth and the place in which *karma* can be made, that is, human birth in this world.

See also: **bhog bhūmi**, **karma bhūmi**, **karma yoni**.

birth and death See **reincarnation**.

bondage See **captives**.

captive(s), captivity A captive is one who is confined or restrained in some way. This is the state or condition of captivity. Mystically, the soul held in thrall by the mind is said to be a captive, far away from its own true home. Its prison is this world and its cell, the body. The soul is also held captive by the negative power within the orbit of the greater mind, which includes the astral and causal heavens. Hence, although released at death from the bodily jail, the soul still remains captive to the mind, and is still subject to birth and death unless and until it can gain release from all aspects of the mind.

The metaphor has been very commonly used. The Greek Stoic philosopher, Epictetus (*c.*50–120 CE), speaks of being "imprisoned" in the "paltry body":

> You might come to him (your teacher) saying, "Epictetus, we can no longer bear to be imprisoned in this paltry body, feeding and resting and cleansing it, and because of it having to associate with every kind of person. Are these things not indifferent, and nothing to us, and is not death no evil? Are we not akin to God, and have we not come from Him? Suffer us to go back again to the place from which we came; suffer us, at last, to be delivered from these fetters, that are fastened to us and weigh us down." …
>
> And thereupon it would be my part to reply, "My friends, wait upon God. When He shall give the signal, and release you from this servitude, then you shall depart to Him. For the present, be content to remain in this place, where He has stationed you."
>
> *Epictetus, Discourses 1:9.12–14, 16; cf. DE p.25, EDA1 pp.66–69*

At a similar period, Paul writes to the Christians in Rome that he is aware of a law acting in his body, "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin":

> I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
> But I see another law in my members,
> warring against the law of my mind,
> and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin
> which is in my members.
> O wretched man that I am!
> Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
>
> *Romans 7:22–24, KJV*

Paul was no doubt referring to Jesus as his deliverer. Likewise, in the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas addresses Jesus as the "Ransomer of captives":

> My Lord and my God, who travels with your servants,
> who guides and corrects them that believe in you,
> the Refuge and Rest of the oppressed,
> the Hope of the poor and Ransomer of captives.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 10; cf. ANT p.368*

Similarly, in the *Acts of John,* John speaks of the chosen souls as the flock that has been rescued by Jesus from captivity to Satan:

> Come in peace, O congregation
> that was estranged from its Master,
> and lo, today has repented,
> and been united with the number (of the chosen ones).
> Come in peace, O flock, that was led captive by Satan,
> and which its Master has brought back,
> that the ravening wolves might not rend it.
>
> *Acts (= History) of John, AAA p.47*

A Manichaean hymn follows the same theme, though here the Saviour is Mānī:

> Come in peace, liberated Sovereign!
> Come in aid, good Spirit, Apostle for peace,
> Helper of the meek and Conqueror of the aggressors!
> Come in peace, new Sovereign!
> Come in peace, Redeemer of the captives and Healer of the wounded!
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.312ff., RMP bt, ML pp.107–8; cf. GSR p.65:4.2*

In another Manichaean text, the writer addresses himself as a "captive soul", exhorting himself to escape from the negative power and the troubles of life under the dominion of the "powers of darkness":

> To you I will speak, my captive soul:
> remember your (real) home....
> Remember the devouring (monsters) ... that captured you,
> and hungrily devoured you....
> Remember the hard, primeval battle and the many wars
> fought with the powers of darkness....
> Remember the trembling, the weeping, and the grief
> that you had at that time....
> Gaze at the mighty divine form of the beloved Fathers.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, MM3 p.876ff., RMP bb, bc; cf. ML p.49*

Since physical existence is considered to be exile and captivity, death has always been regarded by mystics as a time of release from captivity, as in the Manichaean hymn:

> Be glad of heart on this day of departing,
> for sickness is ended, and all your rigours.
> And you will go forth from this deceiver (the body),
> which has made you faint
> through distress and the agony of death.
> You were held back within the Abyss,
> where all is turmoil;
> You were made captive in every place.
> You were suspended amid all rebirths.
> You have suffered ravages amid all cities.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VIIa:11–14; cf. MHCP pp.166–67*

However, mystics also point out that death alone does not automatically give release from the negative power and the possibility of rebirth.

Other traditions have used the metaphor with the same meaning. Thus, Seva Singh writes in his introduction to the English edition of *Sar Bachan* (prose):

> The soul itself is unchangeable, the material forms only are changeable. *Kāl Purush* has all souls in this region in his clutches. He creates bodies in which souls are kept prisoners.
>
> *Seva Singh, in Sar Bachan Prose, SB p.150*

See also: **bandhan, bandīvān, exile** (6.2), **freedom, ḥevel, ḥevlei mavet, slaves.**

chār khāni (H/Pu), **chaturvidha sharīra** (S) *Lit.* four *(chār)* categories *(khāni)*: four divisions, four kinds; four *(chār)* kinds *(vidhā)* of bodies *(sharīra)*. Traditional Hindu thought divides life on earth into four categories:

1. *Jarāyuj(a), jāruja, jeraj.* Those born wrapped in a membrane *(jer)*: mammals, including man.
2. *Aṇḍaj(a).* Those born from an egg *(aṇḍa)*: birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, etc.
3. *Svedaj(a), setaj.* Those born by warmth and water: insects, etc. *Sveda* means perspiration, sweat, moisture, vapour, warmth, heat.
4. *Udbhijja, udbhij, utbhuj.* Those generated by sprouting or germinating from the earth: plants, trees and all creatures of the vegetable kingdom; from *udbhedan,* to sprout.

This classification is ancient, for it is found in the *Aitareya Upanishad,* where the writer is explaining that the supreme Reality is present everywhere and in all things, animate or inanimate:

> He is *Brahmā,* He is *Indra,* He is *Prajāpati;*
> He is all these gods;
> He is the five great elements:
> earth, air, *ākāsha,* water, light; …
> He is those born from an egg *(aṇḍaja),*
> from a womb *(jāruja),* from humidity *(svedaja),*
> and by sprouting *(udbhijja).*
> He is horses, cows, human beings, elephants –
> whatever has breath, whether it walks or flies –
> and all that is stationary.
> All this is guided by consciousness *(prajñā),*
> is established in consciousness.
> The universe has consciousness for its guide:
> Consciousness is the foundation,
> and consciousness is *Brahman.*
>
> *Aitareya Upanishad 3:1.3*

The same classification is found in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa.*[1]

The equivalent Sanskrit term for *chār khāni* is *chaturvidha sharīra* (*lit.* four kinds of bodies). The *Vedāntasāra* says:

> The four kinds of gross bodies *(chaturvidha sharīra)* are:
> Those that are born of the womb *(jarāyuja),* the egg *(aṇḍaja),*
> moisture *(svedaja)* and the soil *(udbhijja).*

Those that are born of the womb refer to men, beasts, etc.
Those that come out of the egg are the birds, reptiles, etc.
Those that are born of moisture are the lice, mosquitoes, etc.
Those that spring from the soil are the trees, creepers, etc.

Sadānanda, Vedāntasāra 2:105–9, VSY pp.61–62

Indian mystics have used this simple traditional classification in order to draw attention to the vast number of creatures which live on this planet, and to point out that to be born as a human being is a rare opportunity of which full advantage should be taken. The nineteenth-century Indian mystic, Tulsī Sāhib, writes:

Rare is the human form, even for the gods:
so have all proclaimed from the rooftops.
All have proclaimed from the rooftops:
even gods do not obtain the human form.

The foolish aspire for a heaven
from which even gods get cast into hell,
when the merit of their good deeds ends.
Deluded into performing pious deeds,
souls wander in the four divisions *(chār khāni).*

He who has perceived the Essence
within his body and mind,
looks down with disdain, O Tulsī,
on the pleasures of paradise.

Rare, indeed, is the human form, even for the gods:
so have all proclaimed from the rooftops.

Tulsī Sāhib, Shabdāvalī 1, Kuṇḍalī 13, TSH1 p.37

The human form may be regarded as the highest, yet the Lord is still present within all creatures. Thus, Guru Nānak writes:

The egg-born *(aṇḍaj),* the placenta-born *(jeraj),* the earth-born *(utbhuj)*
and the sweat-born *(svetaj)* beings are all created by Thee.
I have seen one greatness of Thine:
that Thou art contained amongst all.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 596, MMS

Other mystics have written similarly:

Know that the Lord exists within each one
of the entire kingdom of the four categories *(chār khāni).*
Bhīkhā, Bānī 37:1–2, BSB p.63

You may not get this opportunity again,
and will roam about in the four categories *(chār khāni).*
Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 20:20.4, SBP p.165

A number of Indian mystics have also likened the world to the Indian game of *chausar,* whose four quadrants or divisions *(chār khana)* represent the four kinds of species *(chār khāni)* in which the souls (the pawns) can find themselves.

See also: **chaurāsī, chausar**.

1. *Garuḍa Purāṇa* 2:12.2–4, *GPS2* p.795.

chaurāsī, chaurāsī joni (H/Pu), **chaurāsī jūnī** (Pu) *Lit.* eighty *(assī)* + four *(chār),* eighty-four births *(joni, jūnī);* hence, the cycle or wheel of eighty-four *lakhs,* a *lakh* being 100,000; the 8,400,000 categories or forms of life, commonly called species, into which the Indian *Shāstras* and *Purāṇas* say the soul can transmigrate, this number being said to include the forms of ghosts, nature spirits, gods, goddesses, and other forms of existence on the inner planes; the whirlpool or wheel of transmigration of the soul.

There is a difference between these categories and the species as defined by modern biology. Esoterically, it is the mind interacting with various permutations and combinations of the five *tattvas* in their subtle form that results in the spectrum of creatures or life forms whose total number Indian sacred texts have enumerated as eighty-four *lakhs.* It is the dynamic interaction of the inner mind and various subtle energies with gross material substance which manifest outwardly as physical bodies, human or otherwise.

To be in a human form, the mind of that individual must have earned that right. To be born into a body like that of a horse or a snake, a mind is required that has those particular inclinations, desires and that potential. Similarly, to receive the body of any creature, the mind must first have a disposition like that creature. The same would have been true of extinct species. To be born into the body of a dinosaur would have required a mind with the characteristics of that particular kind of dinosaur. After death, whatever desires have arisen and remain in the mind during life determine the kind of form that that mind will be projected into in its next life, for the satisfaction and fulfilment of its desires and *karma.*

In Indian terminology, all creation below *Brahman* comes about through the evolution or outward expression of *prakṛiti*. *Prakṛiti*, often translated as 'primal matter' or 'nature', contains the potential for all transformations and differentiations in form that can come into being in the creation below. It is a dynamic, ever shifting blueprint or seed essence of a very special kind. Its underlying force or energy is that of the cosmic or universal mind. A *sūtra* in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* makes the observation:

> The change of one species *(jāti)* to another comes about
> by overflow (in the expression) of *prakṛiti*.
>
> *Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 4:2*

The saying is cryptic, and there is no further elucidation. But the essential meaning seems to be that the creation itself evolves or changes as a result of changing patterns in the mind, at higher levels than are physically perceptible. The term *jāti*, here translated as 'species', means both living being and class or category, and may not refer specifically to species, but to all things that change. Either way, the meaning is the same. When the data hidden within the computer of the cosmic mind changes, so too do the images that appear on the screen – the images being the external forms perceived in this world.

Some Indian mystics have said that, in general, the spectrum of living creatures can be divided into those with one, two, three, four or five active *tattvas* (elemental states of matter) in their make-up.[1] These broad categories are then subdivided according to the particular tattvic arrangement, configuration or constitution of each individual species. It would seem, therefore, from an esoteric point of view, that it is the subtle make-up of a creature which defines what it is. However, this esoteric classification of species or categories of life, according to their constituent *tattvas*, may seem to conflict, not only with Western theories on evolution, but also with the data of the fossil record. Since every person educated in a Western school is taught conventional evolutionary theory as a primary truth underlying life on earth, some limited discussion may be of value.

The fossil record shows that, over the last 500 or 600 million years, the species, as defined by science, have changed continuously. There are some old favourites, like crocodiles, and some invertebrates, and some other creatures, which have remained pretty much the same; but generally speaking, change of outer form, especially among the higher classes of creature, has been continuous. Even so, it seems that the broad categories of one, two, three, four and five *tattva*'d creatures have been present throughout.

Mystics say that everything in this world, as well as the astral and causal realms, is governed by the mind. When perceived from a higher level, there is no such thing as chance. The intrinsic law 'governing' the continuous

change among the outward forms of creatures is the law of mind – the law of *karma.* Souls take birth according to their *karma,* according to their mental characteristics and desires. Not only do souls go where their *karma* takes them, but bodies and destinies are also formed according to their *karma* and mental propensities. The mind fashions the bodies required to express the *karma* or mental content. It is all a part of existence within the supremely dynamic and shifting worlds of the mind.

From a human point of view, the laws of nature appear extremely complex, and from a biological point of view one wonders how change actually takes place. The fossil record demonstrates that proliferation in the number of radically new species can occur 'rapidly', over a period of one or two million years or even much less. Outer forms then stabilize to a large extent for a longer period of time. Their numbers then decline – again 'rapidly' – over a million or half a million years. The entire cycle of proliferation, equilibrium and extinction takes about 8 to 10 million years, according to the present calculation of geological time scales. The idea is called the theory of punctuated equilibria.

This periodicity accords roughly with the cycling of the *yugas* (ages), with one exception. According to the *Purāṇas,* one cycle of the *yugas* takes 4.32 million years, not 8 to 10 million. However, the authenticity of the *Purāṇas* is uncertain. Moreover, the various authors of these texts may not have intended their timings literally, or they could simply have been inaccurate, or have been copying each other, or have been conveying traditional oral lore. On the other hand, the scientifically calculated time scales could turn out to be wrong if some premise upon which the dating methods are founded is inaccurate or incorrect. Perhaps – like all else in the worlds of the mind – the universal physical 'constants' on which scientific time scales are based actually have a cyclic variation.

Like everything in the physical universe, the cycling of the *yugas* is really a cycle within the greater aspects of the mind. It can be understood as an increasing and decreasing 'density' of mind energy, a veiling of the Spirit or Life Force that results in an apparent ebb and flow of the immanent creative Power of God. The physical universe is presently at the lowest, densest or most crystallized point in this cycle, known as *kaliyuga.* It is during this period, lasting 432,000 years according to the *Purāṇas,* when it would seem most likely for major extinctions to take place. This is in accordance with current planetary circumstances. The present planetary decline in the number of species, arising from man's activities under the influence of his lower mind during this *kaliyuga,* is only part of a pattern of extinction that has been going on for several hundred thousand years, though it is at its most accelerated at the present time.

As *kaliyuga* progresses, things reach a point where life becomes almost untenable, and – so it is said – the material universe is then subject to

catastrophe, after which, like spring after winter, a flooding of the physical creation with the creative energy of the Life Force brings back a powerful current of dynamic vitality to the physical world. This is known as a *satyuga*. Like an old man receiving the elixir of youth, the physical world then becomes imbued with subtlety and life, and souls in human form become more naturally aware of the presence of God in all things.

According to the *Padma Purāṇa*, human lifespan during a *satyuga* is 4000 years.[2] This may simply be a symbolic way of saying, 'a very long time', but man at that time is clearly a more subtle and inwardly alive being than he is at present, when his mental condition precipitates as a dense physical body which is worn out in less than a hundred years.

Correlating the periods of proliferation in the fossil record with the onset of a *satyuga*, it would seem that it is a *satyuga* that presents the greatest potential for the proliferation of new species. This would happen according to the general karmic trend and laws of nature which presently are not fully understood. Biological and genetic processes may be quickened to an intensely subtle degree, and the planet would be slowly refurbished with new species. But in all instances, the basic operative 'laws' or principles would be those of mind and *karma*. The physical universe and physical bodies, and the way they function, are only aspects of mind.

From a study of the fossil record, it is evident that the forms of new species do not move too far away from their progenitors. This is demonstrable. Palaeontologists have yet to find the 'missing links', not only between man and apes, but also between *any* of the major classes of species and most of the minor groupings too. The theory that single-celled creatures gradually became higher invertebrates, who became fish – and so on – remains entirely a scientific speculation. There is no evidence to support the essential details of the theory. It cannot be demonstrated from the fossil record that reptiles became birds or mammals, or that chimpanzees become human beings.

The fossil record of the last 500 million years or so, however, does suggest that there has always been the same fundamental spectrum of living creatures. This means that there is evidence that the 8,400,000 subtle tattvic configurations, permutations or categories have always been present, although their gross outward forms (which is what science refers to as species) would seem to have been expressed physically in different ways, as the aeons have gone by.

If this scenario holds anything like the truth, Darwin and modern evolutionary theory would be right when observing that species change as time passes. But they would be incorrect to suggest that higher creatures evolve out of the lower. Extending Indian mystical perceptions into a modern framework, each broad category of creature would have its own particular configuration of the *tattvas*. This makes evolution from, say, fish to

mammals quite implausible. The souls inhabiting particular bodies can move up or down, according to their *karma,* but the bodies themselves cannot change over time, by genetic change and inheritance, to other radically different species. Man alone has the *ākāsha tattva* fully active, and he cannot descend, in terms of physical evolution, to any of the animal species, nor can the animal species evolve genetically into man.

According to a mystic perception of things, Darwin was also incorrect to suggest that the processes of change are triggered by natural selection of random or chance mutations. It only appears that way when seen entirely from a physical point of view. Mystics do not accept that anything takes place by chance. Everything happens by the divine will, which, in the realms of the mind, manifests through the hidden operations of the law of *karma.*

The deeper forces which underlie genetic processes even at a physical level are hardly understood by modern scientists. There is recent research, for example, which appears to demonstrate that there is nothing random about genetic processes, at least in bacteria, where the speed of reproduction is fast enough to monitor genetic adaptation to a changing environment. Moreover, the purpose of a large proportion of the genetic material, as it is presently understood, accounts for only a very small percentage of the total. Large sections of the genome are repeated a great many times, for instance, and there is little or no understanding of why this should be so. Modern science calls this 'junk DNA', speculating that it has no purpose, is surplus to the needs of the organism, and has arisen from wastage in the process of evolution. But nature is not normally so profligate, and there have been many instances where science has decided that something has no purpose, only to discover later that it actually plays a vital role. So there is clearly far more to the picture than is presently understood, scientifically.

The essential principles underlying biological and genetic function cannot be fully grasped without understanding the higher laws of the mind. In the world of the mind, everything is dynamically ordered and organized to the utmost degree. There is nothing random about it. There is certainly no room for biological evolution by random genetic mutation. The *Qur'ān* says, "Not a leaf falls, but He knows it,"[3] and Jesus is recorded as saying, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."[4] It means that they do not accept that anything can take place by chance. There is a pattern of causation behind all physical phenomena. Neither a leaf, nor a hair, nor a genetic process moves but by His command.

The Hindu *Shāstras* and *Purāṇas* have divided up the 8,400,000 creatures into various broad categories, and the numbers allocated to each category varies from list to list. In the *Bṛihadvishṇu Purāṇa,* these categories are said to be divided as follows:[5]

Sthāvara (*lit.* not moving, *i.e.* the vegetable kingdom)	2,000,000
Insects (probably includes all terrestrial invertebrates)	1,100,000
Birds	1,000,000
Marine and aquatic creatures	900,000
Animals	3,000,000
Man, gods, goddesses, angels, spirits	400,000

The *Garuḍa Purāṇa,* on the other hand, keeps things simple by allocating 21 *lakhs* to each of the *chār khāni,* the four categories of creature according to traditional Indian thought. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* adds that "it is very difficult for the lower animals to get manhood."[6]

Classified according to modern scientific criteria, estimates of the number of species range as high as 30 million. And when the number of species that have come and gone every few million years in the regular proliferation and extinction cycles are taken into account, the number of species that have lived on this planet alone must reach into the billions and trillions. This further bears out the observation that what scientists mean by species is different from the 8,400,000 forms of life.

Scientifically, species are differentiated according to their physical characteristics. But, esoterically, a species is really a category possessing a particular tattvic permutation or configuration. It is a particular expression at the physical level of mind and consciousness. These categories are differentiated by subtle characteristics, and there is no reason why this subtle configuration should not be expressed in a variety of outward forms as the *yugas* pass. Even now, one species can have many external representations, such as the varieties of domestic dog throughout the world. In fact, what scientists call a *genus* may be more akin to one of the 8,400,000 categories. In that case, all the various species of pigeon, for instance, found worldwide, would actually represent one or a small number of categories, considered esoterically. Similarly, Asian and African elephants, together with pygmy elephants and the various recently extinct species of mammoth and mastodon, may all be members of the same category.

But however species or categories are understood, and whatever the processes by which they change at the physical level, mystics have all agreed that the one factor common to all forms of life in this world is suffering. Thus, the twentieth-century mystic, Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, describes at length the state of life in this world:

> All of these beings are continually being 'tossed about' from one body to another. All go spinning as in a merry-go-round, in one life after another. This is the cycle of lives, the wheel of birth and death, or the wheel of eighty-four *(chaurāsī),* in which all living beings have been imprisoned for countless ages....

The human mind is incapable of envisioning the vastness of this cosmic evolutionary cycle. The air around us is literally packed with minute microscopic creatures and all of these, the Saints have always taught, have souls, just like human beings. Both land and water are filled with creatures that must subsist on one another or, to put it more plainly, must eat one another in order to live. It is really an extraordinary spectacle. In the ocean, the whales eat millions of fish and marine organisms, and the big fish live on small fish and other creatures. On the land, lions and tigers eat deer and other animals, and wolves satisfy their hunger by killing and eating goats and sheep, which in their turn live on plants and trees. Hawks devour sparrows and other birds whose food is insects and worms. Man eats all. In short, all living beings, including humans, sustain life by killing and eating some other form of living being.

Every creature, even ants, flies and mosquitoes, it should again be emphasized, possesses an immortal soul, according to the age-old teachings of the Saints. To many Western people, this is an entirely new idea. But to those who live in the East, it has always been an accepted and unquestionable fact. Even vegetables and food grains have souls....

There are countless germs and other microscopic organisms that we inhale and kill in this way, day after day, while thousands of others strike against our bodies and perish. Even in fire, there are *jīvas,* or living beings. Lord Kṛishṇa, one of the great religious teachers of India, is said to have pointed out to Ūdho, one of his disciples, that an ant which Ūdho was looking at, had, during the course of its transmigration, been *Indra,* the lord of paradise, and *Brahmā,* the creator of the physical universe. If such gods can be incarnated as tiny ants, there is no reason why human beings should believe that they are exempt from this law of *karma.*

After death, many souls, heavy with a burden of sins, sink to the lowest hells, where they stay for many ages. And in many cases, even after a soul has suffered untold agonies there, it is not always permitted to enter a human body. A serpent, a blade of grass, a bird – these are some of the forms into which it may be born. But after a seemingly endless sojourn in inferior bodies, the soul will come back once again to the human body. If, however, a soul is descending directly from *svarg* (paradise), it will always incarnate first as a human being.

To pass the entire round of 8,400,000 different forms of species would take the soul many *yugas* (ages) to complete. Even if an average of ten years were to be allowed for one life, ... it would require eighty-four million years for a soul to get the human body again. In addition to the trees, there are other living things such as, for example,

snakes, that are proverbially long-lived. Man's average span of life is five or six decades. But even if, for the whole of this human life, one should live happily, would it compensate for the many ages spent in the lower forms of existence that preceded the life as a human being?

Actually, no words can describe the agony experienced by the unliberated souls as they travel, life after life, through the round of eighty-four. Thousands of them in animal bodies are butchered every day. They keep crying out in anguish, but who pays any heed to their shrieks? What court is there to grant them justice? Millions of goats and sheep are sent bleating with fear to slaughter houses, and have their throats cut mercilessly. The necks of hens are wrung while they struggle in intense pain. Time was when they too were human beings, and quite possibly of a higher status than you or I. They may well have been aristocrats, millionaires, kings or emperors. But today they are hens or goats. And who will listen to their agonized pleading? None, of course.

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Discourses on Sant Mat 3, DSM pp.57–60

This is a graphic picture, but not an overstatement. Many mystics have described this world as a prison or a hell, and have advised the human beings here to try and find a way out of the maze while they have the chance of being in the human form:

For several births, thou became a worm and a moth.
In several births, thou wert an elephant, a fish and a deer.
In several births, thou became a bird and a snake.
In several births, thou wert yoked as a horse and an ox.
Meet the Lord of the universe *(Jagdīs):*
this is the time to meet.
After a long time this human body is fashioned.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 176, MMS

After passing countless lives in *chaurāsī,*
you have received a human body.
If you let it pass without devotion *(bhakti),*
you will once more fall back into *chaurāsī.*

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Karma Anusār Yoni 65, SBB p.21

After wandering about in *chaurāsī,*
you have received human birth.
Why waste it in false love and friendship?

Dharamdās, Shabdāvalī, Mukti Līlā 4, DDS p.73

The whole world is drowning in the current of *chaurāsī*.
O my Lord, save me from this coming and going *(āvāgavan)*.

Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 6:3–4, MBS p.28

Mystics also say that without a *Satguru* and contact with the divine creative Sound or *Shabd*, release from *chaurāsī* is not possible:

The mortals continue wandering
in eighty-four *lakhs (chaurāsī)* of existences,
and, without the *Guru*, they obtain not emancipation *(mukat)*.

Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 70, MMS

Of *Shabd, Shabd* and *Shabd* do I sing:
you, too, attune your soul to it,
You will earn release from *chaurāsī*,
reach your true home
and the drudgery of birth and death *(janam-maraṇ)* will end.

Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:19.14–15, SBP p.126

See also: **āvāgaman**, **chār khāni**, **karma**, **reincarnation**, **tattva** (5.1), **yuga** (5.2).

1. *e.g.* Mahārāj Charan Singh, *Light on Sant Mat* 11, 12, *LOSM* pp.93, 99–100; *Master Answers* 292, *MA* pp.335–36; Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, *Spiritual Gems* 140, 198:14, *SG* pp.199, 314; *Discourses on Sant Mat* 1, *DSM* p.12.
2. *Padma Purāṇa* 3:7.4, *PP4* p.1366.
3. *Qur'ān* 6:59, *KI*.
4. *Matthew* 10:30, *KJV*.
5. *Bṛihadvishṇu Purāṇa;* in *HV18* p.754.
6. *Garuḍa Purāṇa* 2:12.2–4, *GPS2* p.795.

chaurāsī kā chakra (H), **chaurāsī dā chakkar** (Pu) *Lit.* wheel *(chakra)* of eighty-four *(assī-chār);* the wheel of birth and death in eighty-four *lakhs* of categories or forms of life, a *lakh* being 100,000.

See **chaurāsī**.

chausar, **chaupaṛ** (H) An Indian board game, somewhat similar to ludo, in which the 'board', usually made of cloth, has four folds, each quarter being divided into smaller squares. In the centre, lies one larger square

or 'home'. Each player has four pawns and the aim, at the throw of a dice, is to move all the pawns out of the smaller squares, along a predetermined route circling completely around the board, through each of the four quadrants, into the large central square. From there, they are removed from the board, and do not re-enter the game. The player who gets all his pawns home first is the winner. The game must have been very popular throughout India in the Middle Ages, because a number of mystics have used features from it as metaphors in their poetry. The name is of uncertain derivation.

In mystic imagery, the *chār khāni,* the four kinds of life form found in this world according to traditional Hindu classification, are sometimes represented by the four quarters of the *chausar* 'board', each quarter being divided into smaller divisions – symbolic of the many life forms in each of the four categories. Using this imagery, Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh wrote:

> The world is like the game of *chaupaṛ*
> in which four types of creature –
> *aṇḍaj, jeraj, svedaj* and *udbhij* –
> have been created.
> *Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:1.1, SBP p.186*

The four quarters are also used to represent the *chāryuga* (four ages) through which souls cycle endlessly while held captive on the physical plane. Either way, say the mystics, the goal is to escape to 'home', so that the soul may never have to re-enter the game of birth and death. The sixteenth-century mystic of Rajasthan, Mīrābāī, writes that the only way to escape is through the mystic Name *(Nām)* or Word:

> This rare birth, you may not get again.
> Through past good deeds were you granted a human birth.
> Now, day by day, you age:
> with each moment your life wanes.
> When death comes nothing will remain,
> this precious chance will have been lost.
> Once a leaf has fallen,
> it cannot rejoin the tree.
>
> Fearful is the ocean of existence,
> dreadful currents surge through it.
> Board the ship of *Nām* and cross the sea,
> reach the shore of bliss, and be free.
>
> This vast world, in its fourfold frame,
> is nothing but a game of *chausar.*

Play the pawn of your soul with care,
and then reach home and win the match.
But you are loading the dice deceitfully,
and will pay the price with rebirth in this world.

Saints, sages and seers
try to warn and remind us that life
is only a brief moment of sunshine.
That is why Mīrā longs for love divine.
Mīrābāī, Sudhā Sindhu 9:1, MSS p.747; cf. MDL pp.109–10

The game of *chausar* has a rule that if one player's piece lands on a square already occupied by that of another player, then the latter pawn is removed from the game. The fifteenth-century Indian mystic, Kabīr, uses this feature as an image when he wrote:

Place your hope in the one Name alone:
discard all other hopes and expectations.
Depending on other things will destroy you,
like a pawn on the *chausar* board.
Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Nām 25, KSS p.85, KWGN p.141

Kabīr also speaks of the spiritual purpose of life as a game of *chaupaṛ:*

The *chaupaṛ* is laid at the crossroads,
in the market between the high (God)
and the low (the eye centre);
Says Kabīr, the Lord's slave:
With the Master's guidance,
play the game well.

I took the dice of love,
I made my body the pawn;
As taught by my Master,
I threw the dice –
Thus played Kabīr,
and won the game.
Kabīr, Granthāvalī, Sākhī 1:31–32, KG p.3, KWGN p.646

Similarly, the eighteenth-century Punjabi mystic, Bulleh Shāh, describes human birth as the luckiest fall of the dice (totalling seventeen) in the game of *chausar*. Make use of this opportunity, he advises, earn spiritual wealth, live a saintly life, and give up the ego and running counter to the will of the Lord ("how long will you issue commands?"):

Set yourself to earning, brother,
  for this is the time to earn.
You have the count of seventeen on the dice:
  with such a count to your credit,
  you should not lose the game.
When the game is lost, the pawns will go,
  the show will be over.
Unwilling to lead a saintly life,
  how long will you issue commands?

Bulleh Shāh, Kullīyāt 57, KBS p.111, SBSU p.307; cf. BS p.315

Chinvatō Peretū (Av) *Lit.* Bridge *(Peretū)* of Judgment *(Chinvat),* the Bridge of the Judge; a term from the *Gāthās* of Zarathushtra, probably drawn from the prevalent Iranian mythology of those times; a mythical bridge, which all souls must cross at their time of death. Safe passage depends on the kind of life the individual has led. The myth is common to a number of cultures that have spoken of the transition from earthly life to life hereafter as a bridge that must be crossed by all.

Zarathushtra says that those whom he, as a perfect Saviour, draws to God will be able to safely cross the *Chinvatō Peretū:*

Those whom I will draw towards Your worship,
  together with them all, I will set forth,
  and cross the Bridge of Judgment *(Chinvatō Peretū).*

Blinded by pride, made deaf by false teachings,
  princes and priests attempt to yoke mankind
  to evil deeds and thus destroy true life.
But when they draw near
  to where the Bridge of Judgment *(Chinvatō Peretū)* stands,
  their own soul and inner self will torment them.
Then, for all time, will they be dwellers
  in the abode of untruth *(drujō demāna).*

Zarathushtra, Yasna 46:10–11; cf. DSZ pp.605, 609

See also: **Pul-i Ṣirāṭ**, **Styx**, **Vaitaraṇī**.

condemnation A sentence passed on a guilty person, often of death. Mystically, a soul is condemned to life in the spiritual death and darkness of physical existence as a sentence or judgment meted out according to the actions and desires of past lives. As Jesus says in John's gospel:

For God sent not his Son into the world
to condemn the world;
But that the world through him might be saved.

He that believeth on him is not condemned:
But he that believeth not is condemned already,
because he hath not believed
in the Name of the Only-begotten Son of God.
John 3:17–18, KJV

Masters are not sent by God into this world in order to condemn it, for those who do not believe in the Son are "condemned already" to living here, in darkness. As Jesus continues:

And this is the condemnation:
That light is come into the world,
and men loved darkness rather than light,
because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light,
neither cometh to the light,
lest his deeds should be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light,
that his deeds may be made manifest,
that they are wrought in God.
John 3:19–21, KJV

The Son is the "light" who has come into the world, but those who do not believe in him are condemned to their own "darkness", a "darkness" which arises out of their sins or bad *karma*. It is also the nature of a mind steeped in its own darkness to hate the light. Such people automatically and instinctively fear the light and the teachings given by a Master, because deep down their conscience is stirred, and they are apprehensive of what following a Master would entail. But "he that doeth truth" or practises the truth, the true path of the Word, is drawn to the light. His practice and conduct bring him to God, safe from "condemnation".

See also: **death** (6.2).

cup of forgetfulness, cup of soberness According to Greek mythology, when the souls of mortals left this world they went to the underworld, *Hadēs*.

There, if they drank the water of forgetfulness from the River Lethe, located on the left of the House of *Hadēs*, they forgot all their past. But if, according to the doctrines attributed to the semilegendary Orpheus, the soul drank from the Wellspring of *Mnemosynē*, also known as the Lake or Water of Memory, then they would be granted some degree of heavenly bliss. *Mnemosynē* was the Greek goddess of memory, and the mother, by *Zeus*, of the nine Muses.

The myth is perhaps an allegory for the forgetfulness of the soul on its taking birth in this world. The soul forgets not only its past lives and sins, but also its divine origin with God. The cup of forgetfulness and its converse, the cup of soberness, are images derived from this myth, found, for instance, in the *Pistis Sophia*, in a section where Jesus is in conversation with his disciples concerning the fate of those who behave in certain ways.

He is asked about the fate of the slanderer, the murderer, the thief, the arrogant man and so forth. The reply to each is a description of various unpleasant experiences that the soul will meet in some hellish realm, after which it is given birth in a human body with a variety of defects. Some are born lame, some deformed, some constantly afflicted with various troubles, and so on.

The questions and their answers follow a repetitive formula, and it is unlikely that they were intended literally. Even so, they demonstrate the principle of rebirth according to an individual's actions. The rebirth, for example, of one who curses others is described:

> And there comes *Jalouham*, … he who gives the cup of forgetfulness to the souls, and he brings a cup full of the water of forgetfulness and he gives it to the soul, and it drinks it, and forgets every region and all regions to which it has gone (since death). And it is cast into a body in which it will spend its time continually troubled in heart. This is the punishment of the man who curses.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 374:144; cf. PS pp.748–49, PSGG p.315*

After a number of similar descriptions, John questions Jesus about the fate of someone who has only performed good deeds, but has not received the initiation that will enable him to pass by the *archons* (rulers) of the higher realms. Jesus replies that when he dies, he will first spend some time in the inner regions. Then, like the others, he too will be given the cup of forgetfulness, but followed this time by a "cup of soberness", which does not permit that soul to entirely forget its divine origin:

> Afterwards a receiver … also brings a cup which is filled with understanding and wisdom, and there is soberness in it. And he gives it to the soul, and it is cast into a body which is not able to sleep nor is it

> able to forget, because of the cup of soberness which was given to it. But it will be a goad to its heart continually, to seek for the mysteries of the Light until it finds them … and inherits the eternal Light.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 383:147; cf. PS pp.766–67, PSGG p.323*

In other words, the reward of a pure life is that the soul develops a longing to find God.

See also: **reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity)**, **Water of Memory** (3.1).

custom A levy imposed for public purposes by governmental authorities or on a defeated country by the victorious rulers; similar terms include poll tax, toll, tax, tribute and head money.

The term and others like it have been used for the debt all souls owe to the ruling power in this part of creation, the negative power. In the time of Jesus, the ruling authority in large areas of the Middle East and Europe was the Romans, whose head was the Emperor or Caesar. Caesar was thus used by analogy for the negative power, for everyone had to pay tribute to Caesar in cash or kind.

Jesus seems to be hinting at this when he speaks of paying tax to Caesar, the incident being recorded by Mark, and copied over by Matthew and Luke:

> Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?"
>
> But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money." And they brought unto him a penny.
>
> And he saith unto them, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They say unto him, "Caesar's."
>
> Then saith he unto them, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.
>
> *Matthew 22:15–22, KJV*

Jesus probably means that whatever debt of sins a person has in this world must be paid to the ruler of this world, that is, to the negative power, here

symbolized as Caesar. But what belongs to God – the soul – should be rendered unto God, should be returned to Him.

At least some of the early Christians understood the passage in this way. In the gnostic text, *Pistis Sophia,* Mary makes a number of comments concerning a previous discourse given by Jesus on the association of the soul with the "counterfeit spirit" (the mind), and the surrendering of its "destiny" (its load of sins or *karma*) to the regions of the *"archons"* (rulers) before it can leave. She says:

> The second thought, moreover, that you have just now finished saying to us concerning the soul which received the mysteries:
>
> "When it comes to the region of the *archons* of the way of the midst, they come forth before it in exceeding fearfulness.... And it gives the destiny to its (appropriate) region, and it gives the counterfeit spirit to its own region. And it gives the apology and the seals of every one of the *archons* which are upon the ways of the midst. And it gives the honour and the glory and the eulogy of the seals and the songs of praise to all those of the region of the Light."
>
> Concerning this saying, my Lord, you spoke once through the mouth of our brother Paul, saying: "Give tax to whom tax is due, fear to whom fear, give custom to whom custom is due, give honour to whom honour is due, and give eulogy to whom eulogy is due; and do not owe anything to another."
>
> *Pistis Sophia 293:113; cf. PS pp.586–80, PSGG p.244*

"Tax", tribute and "custom" are all terms used for payments levied by a higher authority, and which are unavoidable, however much a person may wish to be free of them. Similarly with the "destiny", the debt of sin owed to the negative power. It must be paid to the higher authority. The passage relates both to Jesus' saying, and it also echoes Paul's *Epistle to the Romans,* a letter in which Paul talks at great length concerning judgment, condemnation, retribution, the law of recompense, sin, mercy, and so on.

In this letter, Paul says that all souls in this world are subject to the higher rulers or powers of creation. All have been given power by God, and are simply carrying out their task as directed by Him. But, as in a place where only the criminal need fear the police, only the one who does evil need fear the *archons* or rulers. He says:

> Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.
> For there is no power but of God:
> the powers that be are ordained of God.
> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,
> resisteth the ordinance of God:

And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.
For rulers are not a terror to good works,
but to the evil.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?
Do that which is good,
and thou shalt have praise of the same:
For he is the minister of God to thee for good....

Render therefore to all their dues:
tribute to whom tribute is due,
custom to whom custom,
fear to whom fear,
honour to whom honour.

Romans 13:1–4, 7, KJV

See also: **head money, remission of sins** (▸2), **tax collectors**.

cycle of birth and death See **reincarnation**.

debt, debtor A debt is something owing; a debtor is one who owes such a debt. Mystically, the debt that has to be paid back to the negative power is the debt of the sins or *karma* of this lifetime and of many past lives. As Jesus says in the well-known prayer attributed to him:

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 6:12, KJV

Jesus also relates a parable of a servant who is forgiven a huge debt by his master, but then goes out and demands payment of a far lesser amount from one of his debtors. His master, of course, is not impressed.[1] Similarly, there is a Manichaean parable concerning the fortunes after death of free men (realized souls), debtors (those who have debts that can in time be paid off) and slaves (those whose indebtedness is so much that they stand little chance of redemption, at least in the foreseeable future).[2]

The theme of forgiveness for sins or debts is recurrent in Christian and Manichaean literature. One early Christian text speaks of how God Himself came down to earth as a Master to eradicate all spiritual debt and heal all spiritual disease:

The good merciful One brought Himself down to earth
in order to save his creation from impure demons;
And healed diseases and obliterated debts.

Early Christian Liturgy, BDB p.33:57, MEM pp.159–60

And again:

Blessed be the Son of the Good, who atoned our debts!
Blessed is the Physician of the Height, who healed our disease.

Early Christian Liturgy, BDB p.37:5, MEM p.160

In a Turkish Manichaean text, the same feeling regarding the personal debt of sin is expressed:

My God, we are encumbered with defects and sins,
we are greatly in debt.

Manichaean Hymns, XSM p.167ff.; cf. ML p.76

See also: **custom, law of cause and effect, remission of sins** (▸2).

1. *Matthew* 18:23–35.
2. *BMP* p.289*ff.*, in *e.g. GSR* pp.185–86:5–6; see also **merchant** (3.3).

destiny The predetermined future of a person or thing; the predetermined or inevitable course of events; fate, fortune, lot; also, the power or agency that predetermines the course of events, sometimes personified as a deity; from the Latin *destinata,* the feminine past participle of *destinare* (to make firm, to establish).

Although man may feel that he has the freedom to act, yet it is also clear that the major events of life are out of his control. This is reflected in his religions and beliefs. In Babylonian mythology, for example, the patron deity, *Marduk,* obtains mastery over human destiny when he acquires the 'tablets of fate' during his primeval battle preceding the creation. In Mesopotamian religion, man's destiny is generally understood to be one of toil, providing food, clothing and housing for the gods, so that they can lead a life of leisure, as a kind of ruling landed nobility.

In ancient Greek mythology, man's destiny was spun by the three Fates, offspring of *Zeus* and the titan *Themis,* symbolized as three ancient women who spun, measured, and at last cut the thread of human life. These were *Lachesis* (the Disposer of Lots), *Clotho* (the Spinner) and *Atropos* (the Inescapable).

In Baltic religion and mythology, which bears some intriguing similarities to ancient Vedic and Iranian beliefs, *Laima* (from *laime*, 'happiness', 'luck') is the goddess controlling human destiny, sometimes arguing with *Dievs,* the sun god, over the fate of men. Even so, although a man's destiny is determined by *Laima* at the moment of birth, he still has the freedom, within the constraints of that destiny, to lead a good or evil life.

The practice of astrology in many lands throughout the ages also demonstrates the prevalence of the belief that events are destined and that it is even possible to know of them beforehand. This form of divination, possibly of Babylonian and Egyptian origin, existed in ancient Greece. Originally, the Greek word *tychē* (fate) was used for the capricious or chance aspect of existence. Astrology transformed this belief into one in which the stars were understood as deities controlling human affairs. Since these celestial deities were systematic, orderly and predictable in their behaviour, human affairs could also be foretold. Events could then be either welcomed, avoided, or manipulated by means of magic.

The belief in astrology and the deities controlling destiny reflect one of the difficulties besetting human existence.

See also: **Fates, free will, karma, mìng, qaḍā', al-Qalam, qismah**.

dungeon See **prison**.

Fates (Gk. *Moirai,* L. *Parcae*) The three goddesses of Greek mythology, the offspring of *Zeus* and the titan *Themis,* who control the destinies of men, especially their lifespan and their allotment of suffering. The equivalent Roman goddesses were known as *Decuma, Nona* and *Morta*. Homer (*c.*800 BCE) also speaks of fate (sg. *moira*) as an impersonal power, with functions sometimes interchangeable with the gods. As he writes of Odysseus in the *Odyssey,* "His fate he shall pay out at home, even as the Spinners who spun for him on the day his mother bore him."[1]

From the time of Hesiod (C8th BCE), the Fates were personified as three ancient women who spun, measured and at last cut the thread of human life, an imagery that was built upon by later writers. In Greek, these three were *Lachesis* (the Disposer of Lots), *Clotho* (the Spinner) and *Atropos* (the Inescapable).

Plato (*c.*427–347 BCE) speaks of the three Fates in the vision of Er:

> The Fates, the daughters of Necessity, (were) dressed in white with garlands on their heads.... *Lachesis* was singing of the things that were, *Clotho* of the things that are, and *Atropos* of the things that will be.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:617b*

The three Fates parallel the Hindu understanding of time, expressed in terms of the three *guṇas* (fundamental attributes of change). *Lachesis,* like *tamoguṇa,* represents the past; *Clotho,* like the *satoguṇa,* represents the present; *Atropos,* like *rajoguṇa,* represents the future. Time is the fabric upon which the pattern of destiny is woven. Consequently, the Fates also represent the three aspects of *karma. Lachesis* represents the *siñchit* or store of *karma* from past lives; *Clotho* represents the *prālabdh* or fate *karma* of this life; while *Atropos* represents the *kriyamān* or newly created karma that must be accounted for in future lives.

The Fates are usually represented as independent of the gods. In some legends, *Zeus* does influence them; but in most he has no control over them.

See also: **destiny, karma, mìng, qaḍā', al-Qalam, qismah, reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy)**.

1. Homer, *Odyssey* 7:197.

fish Mystically, the soul swimming either in the ocean of this world or in the ocean of God's love. In one of the Manichaean psalms, for instance, the writer is speaking of the Saviour's coming to this world, when he says:

> He burst … their nets that were spread,
> he let the fish out to their sea.
> *Psalms of Thomas I, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.205*

Just as fish swim in the water of the world, so do all souls – consciously or unconsciously – swim in the Living Waters of the Word. The metaphor is found among the writings of the early Jewish mystics. In *Ezekiel,* for example, the prophet relates an allegory or parable, told as a revelation or a vision, in which a river flows out from under the threshold of the Temple at Jerusalem, increasing in volume as it flows along. All manner of fish live and thrive in this river. Says the prophet:

> Wherever the river flows,
> all living creatures teeming in it will live.
> Fish will be very plentiful,
> for wherever the water goes it brings health,
> and life teems wherever the river flows.
>
> There will be fishermen on its banks:
> fishing nets will be spread from Eyn-gedi to Eyn-‘eglayim.

The fish will be as varied and as plentiful
  as the fish of the Great Sea (the Mediterranean).

Ezekiel 47:9–10, JB

The narrative is clearly meant as an allegory, because there is no river at Jerusalem. The "river" is the Life Stream of the Word flowing out from the heavenly Jerusalem, from the real "temple" of God, the spiritual Source of life and being to which all true worship is addressed. In this river, all souls in creation are swimming, whether they know the origin of their life force or not. The forms they inhabit are "varied" and "plentiful". And all along its banks are "fishermen", probably an allusion to the prophets or mystics. They are the ones who take the fish out of the water of existence, and back to God.

The metaphors of fish and fishermen are integral to a long Mandaean allegory in which the Fisher of souls (the Saviour) catches fish (souls) in his Net (the Word), and takes them back to God, saving them from the nets and foul-smelling marshes of the world. In the story, the "Fisher" describes how he has been divinely commissioned to come to this world and collect souls:

A Fisher am I of Great Life (God),
  a Fisher am I of the Mighty;
A Fisher am I of Great Life,
  an Envoy whom Life has sent.
It (Great Life) spake unto me:
"Go, catch fish who do not eat filth,
  fish who do not eat water fennel,
  and reek not of foul-smelling fennel.
They do not come nigh to devour bad dates,
  and get caught in the nets of the marsh."

Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.151, GJB p.75; cf. JM pp.154–55

The same metaphor has been used by other mystics. The Indian mystic, Guru Nānak (1469–1539), likens the souls facing death in this world to fish caught unawares in the fishermen's nets:

The fish did not pay attention to the net
  in the brackish and unfathomable sea.
Why did the very clever and beautiful fish have so much confidence?
Because of her doing (folly), she was caught:
  death cannot be averted from over her head.
O Brother, do then deem death hovering over thy head like this.
As is the fish, so is the man:
  death's noose falls over him, unaware.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 55, MMS

See also: **Fisher** (▸2), **nets** (6.2).

freedom Personal liberty; the condition of being without bondage or limitation; the state of being free, either politically, socially, morally or spiritually, etc.; the liberty to act in a chosen and/or predetermined manner; the state of being free from the consequences of actions; freedom to choose and determine the events of life; freedom of thought – *i.e.* freedom (either personal or sociopolitical) to think or not to think any particular thought, usually also implying the freedom to express that thought in word, art or literature; also, complete personal control of what one thinks and does.

Materially minded people may consider that freedom means doing whatever they feel like, whenever they feel like it, without ever asking how those feelings or desires arise. Spiritually, such 'freedom' is actually slavery to the mind and its desires. True spiritual freedom means complete control and conquest of the mind. This includes freedom from all sins and the necessity of taking birth after birth in this world.

This is also the mystical meaning of terms such as liberation, deliverance, salvation, redemption, emancipation and so on. It is probably what Jesus meant when he said, according to John's gospel:

> Ye shall know the Truth,
> and the truth shall make you free.
> *John 8:32, KJV*

And:

> If the Son therefore shall make you free,
> ye shall be free indeed.
> *John 8:36, KJV*

The Truth is the Creative Word, while the Son is both the Word and its personification in a Master. This is the Power which comes from beyond the domain of the mind and the negative power, and which is truly capable of liberating a soul from birth and death and taking it back to God.

A Manichaean poet wrote of freedom in precisely these terms. In a poem, much of which is missing, where the devotee begs specifically and continuously for release from the "hell" of repeated rebirths in an endless succession of bodies, the Saviour responds:

> You shall be saved from anguish [...],
> you shall not fall into hell [...],
> You shall lie no longer within the foul body [...],

[you shall no more endure] that [heaviness]
amid all sicknesses [...].

But you shall pass in safety by every [...],
you shall reign in gladness and in freedom forevermore.
You shall enter into that Land [...],
and shall rejoice in the gladness of that [...].
You shall abide in tranquillity [...],
and anguish shall never overtake you more.
Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VII:20–22, VIIIa:1–3; cf. MHCP pp.106–7, 110–11

Many mystically minded writers have taken advantage of the wordplay suggested by man's confused understanding of the nature of freedom. The gnostic writer of the *Gospel of Philip* observes:

He who has knowledge of the Truth is a free man, but the free man does not sin, for, "He who sins is the slave of sin."[1] Truth is the mother, knowledge the father. Those who think that sinning does not apply to them are called 'free' by the world. 'Knowledge' of the truth merely 'makes such people arrogant', which is what the words 'it makes them free' mean. It even gives them a sense of superiority over the whole world....

In fact, he who is really free through (mystic) knowledge is a slave because of love for those who have not yet been able to attain to the freedom of knowledge. (True) knowledge makes them capable of becoming free.

Gospel of Philip 77, NHS20 pp.196–99

The author is speaking of the spiritually liberated – the Masters – as those who are "really free". Yet, he adds, they are also the slaves of love, serving those who are in bondage to this world. As he also says:

In this world, the slaves serve the free.
In the kingdom of heaven,
the free will minister to the slaves.
Gospel of Philip 71, NHS20 pp.186–87

And an unknown writer, possibly Pythagorean of the early Christian period, summarizes the matter succinctly:

After God, no one is as free as the wise man.
Sentences of Sextus 27:309, NHS28 pp.306–7

See also: **captives**, **free will**, **ikhtiyār**, **moksha** (▸2), **mukti** (▸2), **slaves**.

1. *John* 8:34.

free will The apparent human ability to make choices which are not determined by any external agencies; the doctrine that such freedom of choice is not illusory; the converse of determinism.

Considered generally, a human being may feel that he is free, but a moment's reflection and observation will tell him that he is not entirely the master of his life and destiny. He does not, for example, choose his parents or his upbringing and early education, things which contribute greatly towards the moulding of his character, determining the way he acts and thinks throughout his life. Furthermore, many events of life happen unsought and unheralded, over which he has no control. In fact, a person does not know what will happen to him in the next minute. He may even die: "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Nor can a person direct the thoughts that pass through his mind, which prompt him, consciously or unconsciously, to act. In most cases, he does not know what he is going to think in the next few minutes. These observations lead logically to the conclusion that a person is neither physically nor mentally free, and spiritual freedom is another matter altogether.

Free will can be understood in many ways, but any analysis of the subject soon leads to the realization that it is complex. As a starting point, any consideration of free will must address itself to the question of who or what thinks that it is free. From this, it may be observed that the feeling of free will arises from a self which feels that it is free.

Therefore, before a person can say whether or not he is free, he must first understand the nature of that self. Is it the body, the mind, the soul or something else? And how is the nature of the self to be reliably determined? For thought alone cannot be relied upon to determine the nature of the self, since the self is itself deeply involved in the processes of thought. An instrument of investigation cannot reliably investigate itself, because there is no objective frame of reference. Consequently, since an intellectual answer to the question is faced with an insurmountable obstacle, it will always remain a matter of debate. And if the nature of the self is accepted as unknown or at least uncertain, then how can questions regarding the freedom of that self be answered with any certainty?

Fortunately, intellectual thought is not the only means of understanding the nature of self and consciousness. There is a form of experience which has characteristically been described as transcending both the intellect and the individual sense of self, and that is mystic experience. In fact, transcendence of the limited human sense of self is one of the characteristics of

mystic experience. Mystics – those who have had this kind of experience – say that it is one of direct revealed knowledge, and that it is the only kind of knowledge which transcends the individual self. It therefore gives the one who has it the opportunity to view the matter of 'self' and 'freedom' from an altogether different angle.

Generally, mystics have said that from God's point of view, He is the only doer, and that man has no free will at all. If any soul in the creation had a will that was free of God's will, then God would no longer be the supreme power. There would be millions upon millions of independent wills, each one exerting its own will over its own independent area of existence. Nor could there ever be interaction between independent free wills, for the exercise of free will by one which affects the free will of another would indicate that none of them had absolute free will at all.

From man's point of view, because he feels he has a self that is separate from God, he feels that he has free will. From a mystical viewpoint, the illusion of free will arises simultaneously with the illusion of a separate self. Mystics say that actually nothing exists but God. Hence, when the individual self becomes merged into God, then the question of free will does not arise, because all is oneness. But in the relative sphere of this world, through his individual self, man feels he has a free will, and it is also that self which has to bear the consequences of his thoughts, desires and actions, through the law of *karma*.

Only a moment's reflection is required to realize that the individual will is so hedged about by the force of uncontrollable circumstances that at best it can only be described as a limited free will. It is conditioned by the circumstances of birth, together with the continuous flow of the events of life – welcome or unwelcome – which impinge unheralded and uninvited upon man's physical, emotional and mental existence.

Moreover, if man had complete free will, then everything that an individual desired would come to pass, and the world would be in even more of a mess than it already is. As the Greek philosopher-mystic, Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE), observed:

> It would *not* be better if things happened to men just as they wish.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 52, HPW p.58*

From a Christian point of view, there is no doubt that Jesus taught some form of determinism or destiny. He pointed out, for instance:

> Which of you by taking thought
> can add one cubit unto his stature?
>
> *Matthew 6:27, KJV*

Man cannot create reality out of his thoughts alone. He cannot simply translate his desires into external reality. Therefore, he is not free. Indicating the Lord's intimate involvement in even the smallest events within His creation, he says:

> Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
> And one of them shall not fall on the ground
> without your Father.
> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
> Fear ye not therefore,
> ye are of more value than many sparrows.
> *Matthew 10:29–31, KJV*

If even such seemingly tiny details as the life and death of a sparrow are within the will of God, as well as the number of hairs upon one's head, then it cannot be conceived that man or any other creature in creation can have a will so free that they can act outside His will.

See also: **destiny**, **freedom**, **ikhtiyār**.

gaya (Av) *Lit.* life; created by the Holy Spirit *(Spentā Mainyu),* and contrasted with death *(ajyāitī),* as described in the *Gāthās* of Zarathushtra.

See **ajyāitī**.

gilgul, **gilgul ha-nefesh**, **gilgul nefashot** (He) *Lit.* rolling *(gilgul)* of the soul *(ha-nefesh),* rolling of souls *(nefashot);* reincarnation, transmigration, metempsychosis; a term borrowed from the philosophers, and used in Kabbalist literature after the appearance of the anonymous, twelfth-century *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance)* in Provence, France, the first Kabbalist text to speak openly of reincarnation. *Gilgul* and its synonym *ha'atakah* (transference) are used in translations of the Arabic term for transmigration, *tanāsukh.*[1]

See **reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism)**.

1. Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, MTJM* p.407 (n.133).

ḥayawānāt (A), **ḥayavānāt** (P) The animal kingdom; connotes both animals as well as the animal nature within man. The Sufis describe *ḥayawānāt* as one

of the seven aspects of divine manifestation. God manifests the creation, and everything in it is an expression of Himself. In ascending order, the Sufis named these seven aspects: the mineral kingdom, the vegetative kingdom, the animal kingdom *(ḥayawānāt),* and human existence, above which lie the stellar, lunar and solar aspects.

The first four aspects are also understood as four stages of spiritual development. *Al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī,* for example, is the 'animal spirit', and refers to the animating spirit that is operative not only in animals, but also in human beings. So long as an individual has not progressed spiritually to the condition of a true human being, his spirit is *al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī.*

See also: **'ālam al-shahādah** (4.1), **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah**, **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī** (5.1).

head money Specifically, a reward for the capture or slaying of a fugitive, such as an outlaw; sometimes used for money payable to a ruling power, either by way of tax or as a ransom to obtain freedom from captivity, or to purchase freedom from slavery. Mystically, the term has been used as part of a family of metaphors for the debt owed by the soul to the negative power. The repayment of this debt can be arranged for a soul by a Master, some of which he pays himself. It has hence been called the ransom or head money paid by the Master. In the *Acts of Thomas,* for example, Judas Thomas speaks of Jesus as:

> This, who was called an impostor,
> and who is the True, and deceives not,
> and the payer of the tax and the head money
> for his disciples and for himself;
> This, of whom the Enemy (the devil), when he saw him,
> was afraid and trembled,
> and asked him who he was and what was said of him.
> And he (Jesus) did not make known to him the Truth,
> because there is no Truth in him.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 143; cf. AAA p.278, ANT p.427*

Or, as an alternative translation has it:

> And he pays the toll and the poll tax
> for himself and for his disciples.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 143; cf. MEM p.89*

See also: **custom**, **remission of sins** (▸2), **tax collectors**.

ḥevel (He) (pl. *ḥavelim*) *Lit.* rope, cord, chain, bond; the meaning contains a suggestion of agony and suffering, hence, physical pain, as in the pain of childbirth *(ḥevlei leidah).* Spiritually, *ḥavelim* is a biblical term used to symbolize the sufferings of worldly experience, the ropes that bind a person to the sufferings and pleasures of life in the creation.

See also: **captives, ḥevlei mavet.**

ḥevlei mavet, ḥevlei Sheol (He) *Lit.* bonds of *(ḥevlei)* death *(mavet),* the bonds of *(ḥevlei) Sheol;* a term suggesting both the suffering of death and the bonds of attachment and desire that make it difficult for a person to free himself from the world of death. The world is like *Sheol,* the dwelling place of the dead, since it represents the despair that springs from lack of love. Both terms are used in one of the psalms, where the psalmist is evidently speaking of this world:

> The bonds of death *(ḥevlei mavet)* surround me,
> and the floods of ungodly men make me afraid.
> The bonds of *Sheol (ḥevlei Sheol)* surround me:
> the snares of death took me by surprise.
>
> *Psalm 18:5–6, KB*

See also: **captives, Sheol.**

ḥisāb (A/P) *Lit.* account, reckoning, calculation; also, arithmetic, mathematics; spiritually, a reference to the divine law that there is a reckoning for every action. As the *Qur'ān* reiterates in a number of places: "God is swift in reckoning *(ḥisāb).*"[1] It also says that human beings are heedless and forgetful of the "reckoning" that follows close upon their heels. In fact, they invariably "jest" at the "renewed message" of the prophets:

> Closer and closer to mankind comes their reckoning *(ḥisāb):*
> yet they heed not and turn away.
> Never comes (anything) to them
> of a renewed message from the Lord,
> but they listen to it as in jest.
>
> *Qur'ān 21:1–2; cf. AYA*

According to the *Qur'ān,* inner thoughts and feelings are also weighed in the divine scales, since God knows everything. *Yuḥāsibukum* is a verb form of the term:

Whether you publish what is in your hearts or hide it,
God shall make reckoning *(yuḥāsibukum)* with you for it.
He will forgive whom He will, and chastise whom He will:
God is powerful over everything.

Qur'ān 2:284, KI

The implication is that this "reckoning" will take place not only after death, but also on the Day of Reckoning *(Yawm al-Ḥisāb)*,[2] meaning the Day of Judgment or Day of Resurrection *(Yawm al-Qiyāmah)*, when all souls will rise from the dead and be judged. Generally, Sufis have expressed no quarrel with this belief, although many have indicated that the Day of Judgment is not one specific day, fixed for all, but is the day of an individual's death. Hujwīrī quotes Junayd who observes that everyone is called "to account *(ḥisāb)*" on the Day of Resurrection, "rich" or "poor":

Junayd answered: "If He will call the rich to account *(ḥisāb)*,
He will ask the poor for their excuse;
And asking an excuse is better than calling to account *(ḥisāb)*."

Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb II, KM p.23

It means that the humble (the "poor") stand a better chance of mercy than the proud.

1. *Qur'ān* 2:202, 3:19, 3:199, 5:4, 13:41, 14:51, 40:17.
2. *Qur'ān* 38:16,26,53, 40:27.

ibbur (He) *Lit.* pregnancy; the possession of a living soul by a soul of a deceased holy person, specifically one of the Jewish patriarchs or prophets.

See **reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism)**.

ikhtiyār (A/P) *Lit.* will, free will, power of volition, power of choice, free choice. In Sufi discussions of free will versus predestination, *ikhtiyār* (free will), *kasb* (acquisition, effort) and *qudrah* (power of action) are contrasted with *jabr* (predestination, necessitarianism). One of the most succinct summaries of the Sufi perspective on the endless debate regarding free will and predestination appears in Rūmī's extension to the story of Adam who, while not forgetting that God was the real doer, nonetheless had regard for the measure of free will *(ikhtiyār)* given to him. According to Rūmī's story, Adam, who symbolizes man, admits his mistake:

Adam said, "We have done wrong unto ourselves":
he was not, like us, unheedful of the action of God.
From respect, he concealed it in regard to the sin:
by casting the sin upon himself, he ate fruit (was blessed).

After his repentance, He (God) said to him,
"O Adam, did not I create in you that sin
and (those) tribulations?
Was it not my foreordainment and destiny?
Why did you conceal that at the time of excusing yourself?"

He (Adam) said,
"I was afraid, so I did not fail to observe due respect."

He (God) said,
"I too have observed it towards thee."

Whoever brings reverence gets reverence (in return):
whoever brings sugar eats almond cake.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1489–94; cf. MJR2 p.82

In another passage, Rūmī points out that the power of free will "is your profit-earning capital". Without free will, action becomes meaningless: "The work becomes unsaleable." Without free will, effort towards the love of God would make no sense: "Free will is the salt of devotion." Everything in creation expresses the glory of God because He is in everything. But that is not as valuable as man's turning to God out of His own free will. The discourse is part of a story concerning a particular individual, but in this context, that person symbolizes man:

God said, "Grant him (man) his need:
let him have a free hand to choose."
Free will *(ikhtiyār)* is the salt of devotion,
otherwise there would be no merit:
The heavenly spheres revolve involuntarily,
gaining neither reward not punishment from that revolution,
for it is free will *(ikhtiyār)* that provides for merit
at the time of the reckoning *(ḥisāb)*.
All created beings glorify God,
but that compulsory glorification has no reward.
(Therefore, God said:) "Put a sword in his hand,
remove from him the incapacity to choose,
so that he may become either a holy warrior or a brigand.

Because 'We have honoured man'[1]
by (the gift of) free will *(ikhtiyār)*,
half (of him) is honeybee, half is snake."

The true believers are a store of honey, like the bee;
The infidels, in sooth, are a store of poison, like the snake....
Those inspired by God are the fountain of life;
Those allured by the enticements of sensuality
are the poison of death.

In the world, praise and "well done!" and "bravo!"
are bestowed because of free will *(ikhtiyār)* and effort.
All profligates, when they are in prison,
become devout and ascetic and invokers of God.
When the power (to act freely) is gone,
the work becomes unsaleable.
Take heed lest doom seize your capital.
The power (to act freely) is your profit-earning capital.
Hark, watch over the moment of power and observe it well!
Man rides on the steed of,
"We have honoured (the sons of Adam)":
The reins of free will *(ikhtiyār)*
are in the hand of his intelligence.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3286–92, 3295–300; cf. MJR4 pp.184–85, in SPL p.114

Now is the time, he says, to use this free will to move towards God. Repentance after death is of no value, since "all profligates, when they are in prison, become devout."

In another passage, Rūmī illustrates the real nature of man's choice. He has the choice to live on the "dry land" of materiality or to set sail upon the broad "sea" of spirituality. Among all creatures, only man is given this choice:

You are a duck: you are one that lives both on dry and wet;
You are not like the domestic fowl,
whose house is dug in the ground.
You are a king in virtue of:
"We have ennobled the sons of Adam":
You set foot both on the dry land and on the sea....

The angels have no access to the land;
The animal kind, again, are ignorant of the sea.
You, in your body, are an animal,

and in your spirit, you are of the angels,
so that you may walk on the earth and also in the sky;
So that the seer with heart divinely inspired may be,
in appearance, "a man like yourselves" –
His body of dust, fallen upon the earth,
his spirit circling in yonder highest sphere.

Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3772–73, 3775–78; cf. MJR2 pp.417–18

The human potential for spiritual development, he repeats, only has any meaning if man can choose to take the spiritual direction. But, he adds, this potential choice only really springs to life when a soul meets a "Joseph" – a Master whose divine beauty awakens the soul's spiritual yearning:

Nobody says to a stone, "You have come late," or to a stick,
"Why did you strike a blow at me, O stick?"
Will anyone address demands like these
to a person who is compelled to act,
or strike a person who is excused
from complying with them?
Command and prohibition and anger
and conferment of honour and rebuke
concern only he who possesses the power of choice,
O pure-bosomed one….

The power of choice *(ikhtiyār)* resides in your inward part,
but it does not wound its hand till it sees a Joseph.
The power of choice *(ikhtiyār)* and the instinct to choose
were latent in the soul:
When it beheld Joseph's face,
then it spread its wings and pinions for flight.

Rūmī, Maśnavī V:2971–73, 2975–76; cf. MJR6 p.179

Joseph is commonly used to represent the Master in Jewish, Christian and Sufi stories because, according to *Genesis,* "the Lord was with him,"[2] and because of his renowned beauty.[3] "It does not wound its hand" refers to the sudden surging of the soul's spiritual longing. Rūmī is referring to an extension of the biblical story of Yūsuf and Zulaykhā. When the ladies of Egypt (the material world) saw the radiant and intoxicating beauty of Joseph's face, the distraction and bewilderment of their desire for him caused them to cut their own hands with their knives.

Ikhtiyār also appears in the significant term, *mawt ikhtiyārī* (death by free choice). It means dying while living, learning to pass through the portals of death while still living in the body.

See also: **freedom**, **free will**, **jabr**, **kasb**, **mawt ikhtiyārī** (▸2).

1. *cf. Qur'ān* 17:70.
2. *Genesis* 39:2, 3, 5, 21, 23.
3. *Genesis* 39:6.

im yirẓeh ha-Shem (He) *Lit. im* (if) *ha-Shem* (the Name, *i.e.* God) *yirẓeh* (wills, desires); if the Name wills, if God wills. A Jewish expression commonly used to convey the idea something will only come to pass if God wills.

See also: **in shā' Allāh**.

in shā' Allāh (A/P) *Lit.* if *(in)* God *(Allāh)* wills *(shā');* a commonly used expression among Muslims, from the *Qur'ān:*

> And do not say, regarding anything,
> "I am going to do that tomorrow,"
> but only, "If God will *(in shā' Allāh).*"
> *Qur'ān 18:23–24*

The lines express the reality that man has no control over or even knowledge of the future. Whether he believes in the omnipresence and omniscience of God is irrelevant to the fact that he lives within the will of a far higher power than himself.

See also: **im yirẓeh ha-Shem**.

jabr (A/P) *Lit.* predestination, compulsion; the heretical doctrine of necessitarianism. This doctrine was considered both heretical and immoral in Islam because the idea of absolute and irrevocable predestination obviates personal responsibility and the necessity of spiritual effort. *Jabr* was a pejorative term used by the opponents of this doctrine. *Jabr* is opposed to *ikhtiyār* (free will) or *qudrah* (power of action). Sufism, as well as orthodox Islam, espouses what might be called 'limited free will'. That is, divine omnipotence does not annul the power to choose good and reject evil, nor the responsibility for striving to do so. Rūmī, for example, distinguishes *jabbār* (the almightiness of God) from *jabr:*

> If we let fly an arrow,
> that action is not from us:

We are only the bow,
 and the shooter of the arrow is God.
This is not compulsion *(jabr),*
 it is the meaning of almightiness *(jabbārī):*
The mention of almightiness *(jabbārī)*
 is for the sake of imbuing us with humility.

Rūmī, Maśnavī I:616–17; cf. MJR2 p.36

Absolute necessitarianism is called *al-jabr al-madhmūm,* while the conditioned form of necessitarianism, which is acceptable in Islam, is called *al-jabr al-awsaṭ.*

Jabr al-Maḥmūd (the necessitarianism of Muḥammad) denotes that understanding of *jabr* which is held by the Saints and prophets. The real relationship between free will and predestination cannot be understood by the limited intellect. Only a perfect mystic, one who knows God's will, can know of God's part in predestination. Only he can see how God has endowed man with will and responsibility, yet retains His omniscience and omnipotence.

jail See **prison**.

janma-maraṇ(a) (S/H), **janam-maraṇ** (H/Pu) *Lit.* birth *(janma, janam)* + death *(maraṇ);* birth and death; the cycle of birth and death.

See **chaurāsī**.

jarāyuja (S), **jeraj** (H/Pu) *Lit.* born *(ja)* from a membrane *(jer, jarāyu);* creatures born wrapped in a membrane (amnion); specifically, mammals; part of the fourfold classification of creatures *(chār khāni)* according to traditional Hindu thought.

See **chār khāni**.

jaṭharāgni (S/H/Pu), **prenatal development** *Lit.* fire *(agni)* of the interior *(jaṭhar);* the fire within; hence, the digestive fire in the stomach (which aids digestion). *Jaṭhar* means the interior of anything, a cavity; hence, stomach, belly, abdomen, bowels, womb. *Jaṭharāgni* has also been used for the *jaṭharayantraṇā,* which refers to the suffering of the embryo in the womb.

The subtle energy centre or *chakra* at the navel is the organizational focus of the *agni* or fire *tattva*. According to traditional Indian thought, when the embryo is in the mother's womb, it is subjected to the inner fire called *jaṭharayantraṇā* or *jaṭharāgni*. In more modern terminology, this refers perhaps to the intense focusing of energies at subtle levels which underlie the formation of a new physical body. The body temperature of the developing embryo is also about two degrees centigrade hotter than that of the mother.

Traditional Indian belief is of the great discomfort of the soul during this period. Bābā Jaimal Singh writes in a letter:

> There are 1600 joints of bones which become firm and strong when it (the embryo) lies on one side for three months, for then it is constantly subjected to the heat of *jaṭharāgni*. It is not possible to describe the suffering at that time. But the counterbalancing is also there. Every minute that soul thinks of God and prays to Him: "Save me! Save me! I have no one to look to. I have taken refuge in you." Then he fixes his faith in God and on account of the power of God's Name, he does not feel pain.
>
> *Bābā Jaimal Singh, Spiritual Letters 10, SLO p.25*

The twentieth-century mystic, Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, adds:

> Saints point out that all human beings come into this world for the purpose of realizing the priceless wealth of *Nām,* but only a few *gurumukhs* (devoted souls) succeed in doing so. The rest have to be born again, and go through rigorous penance in the mother's womb, where they hang head down for nine months under utterly appalling conditions. What sustains the soul during this period is its constant attention in the eye centre and endless entreaties to its Maker to deliver it from this inferno.
>
> He constantly prays that in the new life he will ever remember the Creator. However, as soon as he is born, the entire family is jubilant and fondles him. All around him are strange scenes and novel objects. Beholding them, he completely forgets all promises that he assiduously made while in the mother's womb, and becomes completely oblivious of the Creator.
>
> *Sardār Bahādur Jagat Singh, Science of the Soul II:1, SOS p.89*

The subject has been mentioned by a number of other Saints. In the *Ādi Granth,* the terms used are *mahā agan* (great fire) and *agan udar* (fire of the womb):

Creating man, the Lord instals the creation in the mother's womb.
At every breath, it remembers the Lord, O Nānak,
and the great fire *(mahā agan)* consumes it not.
With head downwards and feet upwards,
thou abidest in a … (dark) place.
O Nānak, why forgettest thou the Master
by remembering whose Name, thou wert saved? …

O mortal, thou wert conceived from the female egg and the male sperm,
and wert placed in the fire of the womb *(agan udar)*.
With head downward,
thou dwelt restlessly in … (a dark, confined) hell.
Remembering God, thou wert burnt not:
so, keep Him clasped to thy mind, body and heart.
He who preserved thee in an arduous place,
forget Him not thou, even for an instant.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 706, MMS

And Charaṇdās says:

The five robbers bring great misery:
they keep us entangled with the world….
Then they take us round and round
in the cycle of eighty-four *(chaurāsī)*,
and burn us in the fire of the mother's womb *(jaṭharāgni)*.

Charaṇdās, Bānī 1, Shabd 5, Chaupaī 2:1, 3, CDB1 p.25

Western psychology and medicine of the past has tended towards the view that the womb is a place of great comfort and security for the developing individual. This is no longer held to be the case, and there is now considerable research that supports the mystics' descriptions.

A developing unborn baby (a 'prenate') is called an embryo up to eight weeks of development, after which it is called a foetus. Development is fast. By the third week, the embryo is two to three millimetres long, and the heart is beating. During the fifth week, the arms and legs bud. During the sixth week the embryo is almost half an inch or just more than a centimetre long. By the eighth week, though very small, the embryo begins to look like a baby.

During the first half of the twentieth century little attention was given to prenatal experience. Western medical science mistakenly assumed that, due to the incomplete myelination of their nerve axons, prenates and new babies were unable to feel pleasure or pain. The common cultural myth during this time was that prenates were just cells happily growing in the womb without

consciousness or experience. Because of this, surgeries were performed on babies without the benefit of pain-reducing anaesthetics. In the United States, boys were commonly circumcised without analgesic pain medication. During much of the twentieth century in the West the womb was often referred to as a cooker for prenatal development.

By 1950, Dr Frank Lake, an English psychiatrist and theologian, coined the term 'Maternal-Foetal Distress Syndrome' based on memories from his patients of womb experiences during regressive therapy.[1] In later years, his colleague and student, Dr William Emerson, used similar techniques with his clients. Some of Emerson's adult clients experienced an unexplained sense of loss, deep grief, separation and loneliness.[2] During therapy sessions, in an effort to find the cause of these symptoms, Dr Emerson's clients would regress to early prenatal embryonic time. These clients described experiences of intense emotional and physical suffering. During therapy sessions clients often report the tasting of alcohol, nicotine and metallic tastes associated with anaesthetic drugs. They experienced difficulty breathing, and remembered the environment of their mother's womb to be so toxic that they experienced the terror of imminent death.[3] They said that their sense of loss and grief was so strong that they only wanted to go 'home' back to God. Dr Emerson called this state "divine home sickness".[4] These reports have been substantiated by other clinical researchers in Europe,[5] the United States[6] and Australia.[7]

During the 1960s, *Life Magazine* published a photograph of a foetus sucking his thumb and a series of images of prenatal life by the famous Swedish photographer and researcher Lennart Nilsson.[8] These photographs of life in the womb caused a great awakening and wonderment about the capabilities of prenates. By the mid-1970s, researchers working with premature babies had discovered what any attentive parent already knew: that babies indeed feel pain.

The advent of ultrasound research has lead to a new wave of understanding. Seven-week-old embryos have been observed to be sensitive to touch. Fourteen-week old foetuses have been seen moving away from a light source even though at that age their eye lids are closed. At fourteen weeks, foetuses clearly respond to sound. Other studies in brain research indicate that by twenty weeks or five months in the womb the foetus is already beginning to learn language.[9]

In the early 1990s, Dr Timothy R.B. Johnson MD, Chair and Bates Professor of Diseases of Women and Children, University of Michigan Medical School, clearly showed with video ultrasound and Doppler technology that in order to survive and thrive at birth, foetuses must learn and practise in the womb all the behaviour they demonstrate immediately after birth.[10] This means that behaviour as basic as breathing, sucking, yawning and sleeping all must be learned and practised in the womb. In order for a

new-born baby to be able to take his or her first breath, the foetus practises breathing by inhaling and exhaling amniotic fluid. This exercises all of the musculoskeletal components of breathing, including the diaphragm, intercostal muscles and neurological pathways.[11]

If a pregnant mother uses drugs, tobacco, alcohol or some prescribed medications, the prenate suppresses his or her amniotic breathing, resulting in an inability to breathe at birth. At birth, the baby makes the transition from 'breathing' amniotic fluid to breathing oxygen. Dr Johnson stated that some newborns with foetal alcohol syndrome have not practised amniotic breathing sufficiently to be able to inhale at the time of the first breath, and therefore require emergency medical attention.[12] Babies born to mothers who use alcohol, nicotine and drugs are at higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Over the last few decades of the twentieth century, western scientists thus presented convincing evidence indicating that prenates are conscious sentient beings. The prenatal journey in the womb is so treacherous that in Western cultures an estimated sixty-five to seventy percent of all prenates do not make it to birth. Most of them perish in the early weeks of pregnancy due to spontaneous or deliberate abortions. Many of those that survive the perilous journey experienced many close calls with death before they were born. There is, therefore, a significant body of scientific evidence from the last part of the twentieth century, and on-going in the twenty-first century, that supports the traditional Indian view that prenates in their mother's womb are subjected to the inner fire of *jaṭharāgni*.

1. Stephen M. Maret, *Frank Lake's Maternal-Fetal Distress Syndrome.*
2. William Emerson, *Treatment of Birth Trauma in Infants and Children.*
3. William Emerson, *Treatment of Birth Trauma in Infants and Children.*
4. William Emerson *et. al., Remembering Our Home, ROH* p.31.
5. Ludwig Janus, *Enduring Effects of Prenatal Experience, EPE* p.27.
6. Stanislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future, PF* pp.29–57.
7. Graham Farrant, "Cellular Consciousness and Perception", *CCC* pp.4–7, 20–22.
8. Lennart Nilsson, *A Child is Born, CIB* p.134; see also *Life Magazine*, April 30th 1965 and June 13th 1969.
9. David B. Chamberlain, "Babies Are Not What We Thought", *BNT* pp.1–17.
10. Timothy R. Johnson, "Maternal Perception and Doppler Detection of Fetal Movement", *MFM* pp.765–77.
11. See also Alessandra Piontelli, *From Fetus to Child, FFC* p.37.
12. Timothy R. Johnson, "Maternal Perception and Doppler Detection of Fetal Movement", *MFM* pp.765–77.

judgment See **law of cause and effect**.

justice See **law of cause and effect**.

karam (A/P/U/Pu) *Lit.* grace. See **karam** (▸2).

karam (Pu) *Lit.* action. See **karma**.

karm(a) (S/H), **karman** (S), **karam** (Pu), **kamma** (Pa) *Lit.* action, work, deeds; as in such expressions as *karma kāl* (the right time for action) or *karma shīla* (assiduous in work); although the Hindi is *karm* and the Sanskrit is *karman*, appearing as *karma* in many compound words, the word has become anglicized as *karma.* As a metaphysical term, *karma* refers to the actions and reactions which arise from past thoughts, words, deeds and desires. *Karma* also includes the debits and credits resulting from past deeds which bring a soul back to the world in future lives in order to reap their fruit. Hence, the law of *karma* is the law of action and reaction. It is the law of cause and effect operating as the dispenser of justice in regard to all deeds and desires, and the universal law by which the results of all deeds – good or bad – are experienced.

In ancient Vedic literature, *karma* generally refers to various religious practices *(karmānushṭhāna),* including sacrifices performed with the intention of gaining 'merit' by pleasing the gods. Later on, *karma* came to mean acts of charity and penance, the practice becoming known as *karma-mārga* (the path of virtuous actions) and associated with the rule of *dharma* (religious and moral duty). From there, it developed into a more specifically ethical doctrine associated with an understanding of the fruits of actions *(karma phal).* It was only later on that the term came to be associated with the doctrine of transmigration, and that the idea of the bondage of *karma (karma bandhan)* came into existence.

As part of the understanding of reincarnation, *karma* is usually classified as being of three kinds:

1. *Kriyamān* or *āgāmī karma. Lit.* being made *(kriyamān)* or impending *(āgāmī) karma;* actions being performed during the present lifespan; the effects remaining within the mind due to the desires and actions performed by a person in his present life, to be paid off in future lives.

2. *Prārabdh* or *prālabdh karma. Lit.* commenced *(prārabdh) karma;* the destiny *karma* of the present life which has manifested due to the impressions

left upon the mind of actions and desires of past lives, the fruit of which is being reaped now.

3. *Sañchit* or *siñchit karma. Lit.* accumulated *(sañchit) karma;* the impressions upon the mind of desires and actions performed in past lives, the results of which have yet to be experienced in future lives, and which are presently held 'in store'. These stored seeds of *sañchit karma* are located in *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks), the realm of the universal mind.

Karma is, in its widest sense, the law of all the mind worlds. The universal mind is the great divider of the one divine Source. Through the mediators of *māyā* (illusion) and the three *guṇas* (the fundamental attributes of the mind), the universal mind is the origin of all pattern and rhythm in space and time. It is through the agency of the mind that the One becomes the Many. Yet, although the one Lord appears to be divided into parts when perceived through the screen of this greater mind, all these apparent parts are associated or causally connected. This is the root of the law of *karma:* the causality which arises automatically when the One becomes the Many under the agency of the mind.

Specifically, the term *karma* is commonly used to refer to actions on the physical plane, but this is only one aspect of the total law of the mind. The beginnings of how this is worked out can be glimpsed when it is realized that souls become victims of their actions because of the grooves or impressions left on the mind by those actions. These impressions on the mind from past lives are known as *sanskāras.*

Actions are usually performed with personal motives or mental intent, and the mind has considerable self-interest in their outcome, resulting in further action. All of this leaves its mark on the mind, and it is this mind which brings souls back. *Karma* – even in the so-called physical world – is thus a law of the mind. In fact, the physical world is really a mind world, a product of illusion, and not 'solid, real and physical' at all. As the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* points out:

> The entire world is the play of the mind and the fabrication of thought. Transcend the mind, take leave of all conjectures, … and obtain peace! … Everything in this world, animate and inanimate, is mind.
>
> *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā 4:57, 60; cf. HYP p.55*

The escape would seem to lie in paying off old *karma* while carrying out new actions without any personal desire as to their outcome. But this in itself is insufficient, for the residue of old motives and actions – the *sañchita karma* – now stored in seed form in the higher reaches of the mind, also needs to be cleared before a soul can escape from the realms of the mind.

The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* summarizes the essence of the law of *karma,* adding that he "in whom there is no desire ... goes to no other world" – is not reborn:

> As a man acts, so does he become:
> The doer of good deeds becomes good,
>   the doer of evil deeds becomes evil.
> He becomes pure through pure deeds,
>   impure through impure deeds.
>
> Some say that a man consists of his desires:
> But as his desire, so is his will;
> As his will, so is his deed;
> As his deed, so will he reap.
>
> Concerning this, there is the following verse:
> "According to his attachment and associated deeds,
>   a man reaps the fruit (in the next world)
>   of that to which his subtle mind clings.
> After exhausting the effects of his deeds in that world,
>   he returns once more to this world of action."
>
> So much for the man of desire.
> But he in whom there is no desire,
>   who is free from desire,
>   whose desire is satisfied,
>   who desires the Self alone –
> He goes to no other world.
> Realizing *Brahman,* he becomes *Brahman.*
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:4.5–6*

The *Shiva Saṃhitā* says that actions lead to heaven or hell, while "the creation is the natural outcome of *karma*":

> The fruits of actions are twofold: heaven or hell. The heavens are of various kinds, and so also are the hells diverse.
>
> Good actions are truly heaven, and sinful deeds are truly hell; the creation is the natural outcome of *karma* and nothing else.
>
> Creatures enjoy many pleasures in heaven; many intolerable pains are suffered in hell.
>
> From sinful acts, pain is the outcome; from good acts, happiness results. For the sake of happiness, men constantly perform good actions.

> When suffering for evil actions has been gone through (in hell), then, without doubt, rebirth takes place; when the fruit of good actions has been exhausted (in heaven), then again, the result is truly the same.
>
> Even in heaven there is experiencing of pain by seeing the higher enjoyment of others; truly, there is no doubt that this whole universe is full of sorrow.
>
> The classifiers of *karma* have divided it into two parts: good and bad actions; each in its own way is truly a bondage for embodied souls.
>
> Those who do not wish to enjoy the fruits of their actions, in this or the next world, should give up all actions done with an eye to their fruits and, having similarly discarded attachment to both routine and occasional acts, should apply themselves to the practice of *yoga*.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 1:24–31; cf. SSV pp.4–5*

The *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā* observes that it is good and bad *karma* which leads to birth and death:

> On account of good and bad deeds, the bodies of all animated beings are produced, and the bodies give rise to *karma* (which leads to rebirth), and thus the circle is continued like that of a Persian wheel.
>
> As the Persian wheel, in drawing water from a well, goes up and down, moved by the bullocks (filling and exhausting the buckets again and again), so the soul passes through life and death moved by its *karma*.
>
> *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā 1:6–7, GSV p.2*

Karma and reincarnation are also an integral part of the teachings of the Buddha. Traditional Buddhism, however, does not teach the existence of an immortal soul which travels from birth to birth. In Buddhism, it is said to be the individual personality which survives bodily death, and which is led to the next life by the *karma* of the past. In terms of human experience, the result is much the same. Hence, in the *Dhammapada,* where the Pali variant of the word is *kamma,* the Buddha observes that a person can escape neither death nor the consequences of an "evil deed":

> Neither in the sky, nor in the midst of the ocean,
> nor by hiding in a mountain cave,
> is found on earth a place to dwell
> where a person can escape
> (the consequences) of an evil *(pāpa)* deed *(kamma).*

Neither in the sky, nor in the midst of the ocean,
nor by hiding in a mountain cave,
is found on earth a place to dwell
where a person cannot be overcome by death.

Dhammapada 9:12–13

Ignorance of the effect of deeds makes no difference to their result:

A fool commits evil *(pāpa)* deeds *(kamma)*
in ignorance (of their consequences).
The stupid fellow is then tormented by his own deeds *(kamma)*,
as one burnt by fire.

Dhammapada 10:8

Therefore, the Buddha counsels:

That deed *(kamma)* is not well done,
which, being done, brings regret;
And whose fruit is received weeping
and with tearful countenance.

That deed *(kamma)* is well done,
which, being done, brings no regret;
And whose fruit is received
with happiness and delight.

Dhammapada 5:8–9

It is also clear from the *Dhammapada* that Buddha taught that the mind is the origin of *karma:*

The mind is the forerunner of all states:
the mind comes first, they are mind-made.
If a man speaks or acts with an evil mind,
suffering *(dukkha)* follows him,
as the cartwheel follows the hoof of the ox.

The mind is the forerunner of all states:
the mind comes first, they are mind-made.
If a man speaks or acts with a pure mind,
happiness *(sukha)* follows him,
as a shadow follows his heel.

Dhammapada 1:1–2

And, as a fifth-century (CE) Buddhist commentator observes:

> I declare that *chetanā* (volition) is *kamma.*
>
> *Buddhagosha, in DPN p.3*

The doctrine of *karma* is an ancient one. Buddha taught around 500 BCE. Two and a half thousand years later, in the twentieth century, a definitive and comprehensive letter on *karma* and the means of escaping from it was written by Mahārāj Sāwan Singh to a Western disciple:

> The supreme Creator and the individual spirit in the creation are connected together through the Sound Current. But *Kāl* (as the negative power), also a creation of the Supreme Being, separates the individual from the Current by coming in between as mind and forms. Hence, the individual feels disconnected, but not so the Creator.
>
> There are three minds, and corresponding to these three minds are three kinds of forms:
>
> **1**. In *trikuṭī,* the *nij man* (innermost or causal mind) or *Brahm,* or the universal mind, cover the spirit. The forms here are made of very pure *māyā,* so much so that a majority of the seekers have failed to see here the spirit apart from *māyā* or mind, and therefore considered *Brahm* as all-pervading, etc.
>
> **2**. Lower down, in *sahans dal kanwal* (*lit.* thousand-petalled lotus, the astral realm), the forms of *trikuṭī* get another covering of mind and form, both coarser than the above; the astral form here being governed by the *aṇḍī man* (astral mind). In this zone there are the hells and heavens and numerous other *lokas* (regions). Here the tendencies of the mind are directed inward and are elevating. This mind behaves like a wise enemy (seeking to keep us here).
>
> **3**. Further down, in *piṇḍa* (the region below the eyes), the astral form gets another covering of coarse material, with which we are familiar. The mind that governs this form is called the *piṇḍī man* (physical mind). Its tendencies are outward and diffusive, and it is most difficult to control.
>
> Now, a body actuated by mind and spirit cannot help performing *karma,* and the karmic law, "As you sow, so shall you reap,"[1] continues to work, and the account is complicated with time. The more one works, the greater the entanglement, like a bird struggling in the meshes of a net.

So cunningly has *Kāl* arranged the snare of forms and minds that it is well nigh impossible for man to escape from their influence. No matter how good and godly we may be, that alone will not take us out of these regions. Says Lord Kṛishṇa: "Good actions are as much binding as bad actions. Good actions may be likened to fetters of gold and bad actions to those of iron; and both are equally efficient in keeping us tied."[2] The escape is through the Sound Current.

Only when the attention catches and follows the Current, does the mind become dormant and out of action. At all other times, when the attention is off the Current, the mind gets the upper hand. Through long and indefinite time, ever since the spirit separated from its Ocean and associated itself with the minds and bodies, not only has the upward passage been blocked, but the spirit has been so bewildered, entangled and enfeebled that it has lost all memory of its home, and is contented to live a wretched life in this wretched material world.

There are two ways of looking at this creation:

1. From the top, looking down – the Creator's point of view.
2. From the bottom, looking up – man's point of view.

From the top, it looks as though the Creator is all in all. He is the only doer, and the individual seems like a puppet tossed right and left by the wire puller. There seems to be no free will in the individual, and therefore no responsibility on his shoulder. It is His play. There is no why or wherefore. All the Saints, when they look from the top, describe the creation as His manifestation. They see Him working everywhere.

Looking from below, or the individual viewpoint, we come across 'variety' as opposed to 'oneness'. Everybody appears to be working with a will, and is influenced by and is influencing others with whom he comes in contact. The individual thinks he is the doer, and thereby becomes responsible for his actions and their consequences. All the actions are recorded in his mind and memory, and cause likes and dislikes which keep him pinned down to the material, astral or mental spheres, according to his actions in an earlier life in the cycle of transmigration. The individual in these regions cannot help doing actions and, having done them, cannot escape their influences. The individual acts as the doer, and therefore bears the consequences of his actions.

As stated above, the observations differ on account of the difference in the angle of vision. Both are right.

1. The individual, clothed in coarse material form, sees only the external material forms. His sight does not go deeper than that.

2. If he were to rise up to *sahans dal kanwal,* the same individual would see the mind actuating all forms. The form would be only secondary; mind would be the prime mover in all.

3. The same individual, from *daswān dwār* (*lit.* tenth door, the realm immediately above the universal mind), will see the Spirit current working everywhere, and will see how the mind gets power from the Spirit.

4. From *sach khaṇḍ* (true region), the whole creation looks like bubbles forming and disappearing in the spiritual Ocean.

An individual is endowed with intelligence and does every action knowingly. It is, therefore, incumbent on him to find a way of escape from this entanglement. To raise his spirit, he must struggle against the mind, for he lives by struggle. And where there is a will, there is a way. He cannot say that this is no part of his duty.

The *karmas* are also divided into three groups:

1. *Kriyamān* or new actions.
2. *Prālabdh* or fate (the portion of *karma* allotted to this life, as a result of our previous actions).
3. *Siñchit* or reserve.

As an example, we take the case of a farmer: he prepares his land for sowing seed. He has the option to sow whatever he likes. Suppose he decides on wheat and sows it. The crop matures and he gathers it. Some of it he keeps for his consumption during the coming year, and the surplus is put in store. Year after year, he is living on the previous year's gathering, and increasing his reserve in store, to be utilized in time of scarcity or need.

You will see that he is living and hopes to live on what he himself sows and gathers. Similarly, whatever we do in this life becomes fate for our next life; and some of this is kept in reserve by *Kāl* to be given to us if, by any chance (of course these chances are practically nil), we run short of *karma.* Without *karma, Kāl* cannot keep a spirit down in a body; and without a body, no *karma* can be performed.

It is open to *Kāl* to add from reserve to fate, or deduct from *kriyamān* for reserve. Like the farmer who is preparing his land for the coming season, and is living on the gatherings from the last season, with a confidence based on his reserve, we are undergoing our fate, in which we have no choice. But we do have the choice to work anew as we please, for our future. And we have a surplus, which is our reserve from past lives, of which we have now no knowledge.

We are, therefore, at present doing a dual function:

1. In regard to fate, we are helpless but,
2. In new actions, we have a free hand to sow for the future.

To distinguish between these two types by intelligence alone is not easy for the individual, but a rough rule may be laid down: that which comes in spite of our efforts, and spontaneously, is due to fate. But those whose attention is concentrated and who have access within can read their fate easily. It is an open book to them.

Now, in the physical body, actions are done by the mind from the heart centre. As long as the mind is centred here (in ordinary individuals the heart is the centre of mind action), it will be influenced by emotions. The sensations of joy and sorrow will be felt, as the body is worked by mind from this centre.

When the mind has been elevated to the eye focus by concentration, in other words, when the mind has changed its seat or centre from the heart to the eye centre, then the feelings caused by outward influences working on the physical body will be felt imperceptibly. Joys of the world will not elate such a one, and its sorrows will not depress him.

The fate-actions are stored in the eight-petalled lotus in *aṇḍa,* above the eyes. Their influence is felt forcibly as long as that centre has not been crossed. When that centre is crossed, and the Master's astral form is seen (for that form resides there), the influence of the fate actions will be perceived nominally. The mind has then become strong, and it has the power to bear them without effort. But fate cannot be effaced or altered; it will have to be undergone. An arrow, after leaving the bow, must find its mark.

The reserve actions are stored at the top of *trikuṭī,* and only when a spirit has crossed the third (region of the) mind or *trikuṭī* is it said to be free from all *karma.* Below this, the spirit suffers from the ills of *karma.*

All actions are performed with a motive, and it is the motive that is binding. It is not easy to conceive of an action which is performed without a motive. The mind is consciously or subconsciously active, and it is ridiculous to talk of *karma* without a counter *karma.* There is no escape from counter *karma.* By doing actions, however good, there is no escape. Charity, offerings or pilgrimages must bring their reward, and the soul doing these things must receive the reward in one body or another.

The escape from *karma* lies in the protection afforded by Saints. They are themselves *karma*-less. Their actions are not binding on

them, for their spirits work from *daswān dwār,* a centre above the three spheres of mind and forms, as stated above. The Saints show us the way out.

They say: let new actions be performed in the name of the Master, the individual working in the capacity of an agent only. The new actions, done in this spirit, will not be binding. The fate actions will have been undergone by the time the life comes to an end; the reserve actions Saints partly take upon themselves and partly are undergone by the devotee, as the Saints think proper.

Saints put the individual spirit in touch with the Sound Current, and as the spirit catches it and rises up, it throws off the influences of mind and matter, and gets stronger and stronger. The more the individual works on these lines, the easier the path for him. Otherwise, the course becomes lengthy; but the Saints are pledged to see him through, after they have initiated a soul. The practice of Sound Current cuts the root of *karma.*

The Current acts like a magnet on the spirit. It attracts the spirit to itself, and if the spirit were not covered by the rust of mind and matter, it would go up like a shot. The rust of attachments and impressions is removed by repetition *(simran).* The repetition of thoughts of the journey within replaces our everyday thoughts. Then the mind, instead of wandering outside, begins to take rest and peace within; and when it goes in, the spirit also goes with it; and when the spirit is in, the Current in its turn pulls it up. Once *trikuṭī* has been crossed (this will only be when all karmic accounts are settled), the soul never goes back into transmigration. It will go up to merge in its origin.

Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 20, SG pp.26–33

Many other Indian mystics have spoken on the subject of *karma.* Mahārāj Charan Singh writes of the combination of *karma* which results in a human birth:

It is the combination of good and bad *karma* that shapes our destiny and gives us the human form, through which we settle our account of both good and bad deeds. If we had only good deeds to our account, we would be in one of the heavens. On the other hand, if we had only bad deeds to our account, we would be in one of the hells. Some people have done more good deeds than bad ones; for this reason we see them apparently more happy than others. Others have done more bad deeds than good ones, and therefore they are more unhappy than others. It is for this reason that there are in the world so many pairs of opposites: riches and poverty, health and illness, high position and low, glory and dishonour. Everyone has his own individual *karma,*

the account of which he is settling in this world. This world has never been a paradise; nor can it be one in the future.

Mahārāj Charan Singh, Divine Light, DL pp.8

Sahajobāī says that all souls take birth according to their *karma:*

Worm or insect, god, imp or devil,
beast or bird or man,
or any of the vast and varied forms,
that have their home in the sea;
All these are born because of *karma,*
all these of countless forms and hues.

Sahajobāī, Bānī, Karma Anusār Yoni 51, SBB p.20

Guru Nānak advises accepting the fact that all that happens is the result of one's own actions *(karamān)* in the past:

Impute not blame to anyone:
the fault is of thy own deeds *(karamān).*
Whatever I did, for that I have suffered:
I blame no one else.

Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 433, MMS

Guru Arjun recommends devotion to the mystic Name *(Nām)* as the means of escape:

In the field of actions *(karam bhūmi)* do thou sow the Name:
thy affair shall be accomplished.
Thou shalt obtain the fruit, and thy fear of death shall be dispelled:
ever sing the excellences and praises of the Lord God.

Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 176, MMS

Kabīr says the same:

Meditation on the Name of the Lord
destroys all *karma.*
Just as a heap of hay
is reduced to ashes by a single spark –
So are all sins consumed
the moment *Nām* enters the heart.

Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Nām 11, KSS p.84

And Tukārām says that he has escaped from the field of *karma*, and God has now become everything for him:

The Lord Himself
is now my *sañchit, prārabdh* and *kriyamān karma;*
They are of no consequence to me any more:
I am freed from the effects of age and death.
Tukārām, Gāthā 2932, STG p.489

See also: **chaurāsī, destiny, karma (in Jainism), mìng, qaḍā', al-Qalam, qismah, reincarnation, sanskāra**.

1. *cf.* St Paul, *Galatians* 6:7.
2. A broad summary of various passages in the *Bhagavad Gītā, e.g.* 3:9.

karm(a) bhūmi (S/H), **karam bhūmi, karam bhūmī, karam dhartī** (Pu) *Lit.* land, place or field *(bhūmi, bhūmī)* of action *(karma, karam);* the earth or soil *(dhartī)* of *karma;* the field of *karma;* the melting pots of *karma;* the world, where *karma* is the prevailing law; more specifically, the world in which human beings take birth, since it is only in human form that *karma* is created; contrasted with *bhog bhūmi* (land of fruition), a place where the effect of *karma* is experienced.

The term originated in Hinduism, where *karma bhūmi* refers to this world as the region of religious observances, *karma* also meaning religious rites. In Indian mythology, *karma bhūmi* is an epithet of *Bharata, Airāvata* or *Videh,* all names for ancient India, and – by extension – the world. It was believed that the fruits of actions performed in *Bharata* were enjoyed in other countries, which were known as *bhog bhūmi.*

The term was given its mystical perspective by Guru Nānak and his successors. He writes of the diversity of forms in creation:

Good many are winds, waters, fires,
and good many *Kṛishṇas* and *Shivas.*
There are many *Brahmās,* who are fashioning forms,
and many beauties, colours and raiments.
Countless are the *karam bhūmī.*
Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 7, MMS

Guru Amardās describes the human body as *karam dhartī,* the field upon which the principle of action and reaction is played out:

In the dark age *(kaliyug)*,
the body is the field of actions *(karam dhartī)*:
As one sows therein, so does he eat.
Justice is not administered on mere talk:
by eating poison one dies forthwith.
My brethren, behold the justice of the true Creator:
as anyone acts, so is his reward.

Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 308, MMS

See also: **bhog bhūmi**, **bhog yoni**, **karma yoni**.

karma (in Jainism) (S/H) *Lit.* action, work, deeds. The belief in *karma* and reincarnation is prevalent throughout Indian religions. But *karma* is not always understood in the same way. In Jain metaphysics, which is complex and detailed, *karma* is regarded as being of an actual material nature. It is a force, matter in subtle form, comprised of 'karmic particles'. The field of subtle matter in which these subtle karmic particles can form fills all space. The karmic particles form through the capacity of this subtle field to develop merit or demerit.

As a result of contact with the material world, the soul becomes penetrated by these subtle particles. Together, they comprise the *karma* attached to the soul, according to its former deeds, forming a body or covering of *karma* (the *karma sharīra*). Emancipation implies release of the soul from this subtle, karmic body, which obscures the natural radiance of the soul.

The karmic particles attached to the soul function in such a way that every action or change leaves its impression. This is built into the creature, and serves as the source from which future action arises. The soul incarnates owing to the presence in it of karmic particles.

Five kinds of karmic condition are described, each one producing a characteristic *bhāva* or mental state in the unliberated soul. The last of these states, that of *pariṇāma,* is unconditioned by *karma;* the others arise from physical changes.

In Jain thought, the entire universe consists of two eternal, coexistent but independent entities. That which is conscious is *jīva,* while that which is unconscious or inert, but can be perceived and enjoyed by the *jīva,* is *ajīva.* It is *karma* which provides the link between the two. Liberation *(moksha)* is the freeing of the *jīva* from *ajīva,* through the shedding of *karma* and the cessation of its processes.

The *jīva* remains in a state of bondage *(bandha)* owing to the constant influx *(āsrava)* of karmic matter into the soul. It is *āsrava,* effectively the creation of new *karma,* that results in bondage *(bandha)* of the soul to the body. It is caused by mistaken belief *(mithyā-darshana)* or seeing something

to be that which it is not, by non-renunciation *(avirati)* or attachment, by spiritual heedlessness or mindlessness *(pramāda),* the converse of mindfulness *(apramāda),* by the passions (*kshaya, lit.* decay), and by vibrations or impressions created in the soul by actions of the mind, body and speech.

Bandha binds the soul to the body in two ways. Changes to an individual because of the passions *(kshaya)* are called *bhāvabandha,* while actual physical bondage owing to the influx of karmic particles into the soul is known as *dravyabandha.* Influx *(āsrava)* and bondage *(bandha)* arise from bad thought and action and its resulting *karma.* Liberation is attained only by following certain mental and moral disciplines, which remove the karmic matter already attached to the soul and prevent the inflow of fresh matter. This process takes the *jīva* through fourteen stages of spiritual development, known as *guṇasthānas.*

See also: **guṇasthāna** (▸2), **karma**.

karm(a) yoni (S/H), **karm(a) joni** (H), **karam joni, karam jūnī** (Pu) *Lit.* birth *(yoni, jūnī)* + action *(karma, karam);* that birth or species in which new *karma* can be created: human life. It is man's illusory sense of free will and individual identity which make him responsible for the fruits of his actions, and give him the potential for creating new *karma.* Through his ever present ego, man views himself as the doer, making personal choices at every step in life. Because of this, he becomes responsible for the fruits of his actions. It is also man's ability to act under his illusory sense of free will and reap the fruit of his actions that makes him fit to begin the return to God.

The world in which human beings live is called *karma bhūmi* (land of action). *Karma yoni* and *karma bhūmi* are contrasted with *bhog yoni* (a birth of fruition, where pleasure and pain are experienced as a result of past *karma*) and *bhog bhūmi* (the land of fruition, where pleasure and pain are experienced as a result of past *karma*). *Bhog yoni* and *bhog bhūmi* refer to life in physical forms lower than the human, as well as life in heaven and hell.

See also: **bhog bhūmi, bhog yoni, karma bhūmi**.

kasb (A/P) *Lit.* acquisition; particularly, acquisition by labour, gain acquired by exertion; implies the power to act; thus, the freedom to act, especially in Islamic philosophical discussions. The age-old controversy concerning free will was answered by the *Ash'arīs* with a doctrine called *kasb* – that God originates acts, but human beings 'acquire' them, thereby becoming justly accountable for them.

Some ascetics believed that trust in God *(tawakkul)* was not compatible with any personal initiative *(jahd).* They believed that all efforts to earn a living showed a lack of trust. Such efforts were called *kasb.* They believed they should avoid *kasb* altogether, depending entirely on whatever came as a gift from God. Hence, all *kasb,* even in the sense of efforts to acquire one's daily bread were associated with free will *(ikhtiyār),* and were seen as being opposed to *tawakkul* (trust).

On the other hand, Sufis such as Rūmī stressed the importance of earning one's own living, as well as of making efforts on the spiritual path, such efforts also being considered *kasb.* Not only should one earn one's living, but one should also give to others:

> He (God) has said, "Spend!": therefore earn something,
> since there can be no expenditure without previous income.
> Although He used the word 'spend' absolutely,
> yet read it as, "Earn, then spend."
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:579–80; cf. MJR6 p.37*

He is referring to the injunction in the *Qur'ān,* to "Spend in the way of God,"[1] as well as to the *ḥadīth,* "The dearest to God are those who are most beneficial to His family." Rūmī also alludes to a well-known *ḥadīth* in which one of Muḥammad's followers asked the Prophet whether he should hobble his camel at night to prevent it wandering away, or whether that would exhibit a lack of trust in God:

> The Prophet said with a loud voice:
> "While trusting in God, bind the knee of your camel."[2]
> Hearken to the meaning of:
> "The earner is beloved of God"[3] –
> Through trusting in God,
> do not become neglectful as to the ways and means.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:913–14; cf. MJR2 p.51*

Rūmī is responding to the argument that *kasb* is an attempt to interfere with divine providence:

> Endeavour is not a struggle with destiny,
> because destiny itself has laid this (endeavour) upon us.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:976, MJR2 p.55*

Thus, *kasb* refers both to the importance of earning one's own living, and also to the need to make effort on the spiritual path. The early stages of spiritual transformation involve an effort of will and striving, and are consid-

ered *kasbī* (acquired). The individual self or ego is still very much active, and actions are still attributed to the self:

> But when his affairs are freed from the bonds of acquisition *(kasb),* his actions are no more attributed to himself. Then he is the Way, not the wayfarer, *i.e.* the dervish is a place over which something is passing, not a wayfarer following his own will.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb II, KM pp.28–29*

Al-jihād al-akbar (the greater holy war, self-conquest) is considered *kasbī* (acquired) since it entails effort and striving *(mujāhadah):* one is 'acquiring' virtues necessary to the spiritual uplift. However, there is a frequently repeated Sufi saying, "*Mujāhadah* (striving) leads to *mushāhadah* (vision, contemplation)." *Mushāhadah,* in this context, implies the grace of inner spiritual vision, something which is beyond the scope of effort alone.

Among the Sufis, there are also certain spiritual practices known as *kasb,* which 'Ināyat Khān equates with the Indian technique of *prāṇāyāma* or control of the *prāṇa* (subtle life energies).

See also: **ḥāl** (▸2).

1. *Qur'ān* 2:195.
2. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 20.
3. There are numerous *ḥadīth* to this effect, *e.g. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 2:24.558; see also *MJR7* p.77.

kriyamān karma (H), **kriyamān karam** (Pu) *Lit.* being done *(kriyamān)* deeds *(karma);* present or current *karma;* new *karma* created in the present life which is either translated into the destiny of the next life or moves into the 'store' of past or accumulated *karma (sañchita karma)* with which all souls bound to the wheel of birth and death are burdened; also called, in Sanskrit, *āgāmī karma (lit.* coming or impending *karma), karma* whose fruits will be experienced sometime in the future.

All actions performed with a desire for any kind of reward or recompense, with attachment to their results, or with even the slightest degree of self-interest, leave their impressions on the mind. Since ego is the prevailing and motivating factor in almost all human beings, this means that new *karma* is being created, while the *karma* of destiny is being undergone. This new *karma* is *kriyamān karma.* It is by acting without self-interest or thought of reward that the creation of *kriyamān karma* is avoided.

See also: **karma**.

lawḥ (A/P) *Lit.* a tablet, a page. In Persian, *lawḥ* also implies rising, appearing, being manifest. *Lawḥ* appears in the *Qur'ān,* where *al-Qalam* (the Pen), symbolizing the instrument of creation, inscribes all existence and all individual destinies, together with the *Qur'ān,* on the Well-Guarded Tablet *(al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ).*[1]

See also: **al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ** (▸2), **al-Qalam**, **Umm al-Kitāb** (3.1).

1. *Qur'ān* 85:21–22.

law of cause and effect, law of recompense, law of sin and death The law of causality by which one thing happens as a result of some event or events prior to it in time. Probably all religions believe in a fitting 'reward' for action. In Judaism, it is called *sakhar va'onesh* (reward and punishment). In Indian religions, it is *karma.* Consequently, the events of this life are often portrayed as a person's just deserts. It is evident, however, that in one life alone, sin is not rewarded with punishment, nor good deeds with pleasure and happiness. The bad may seem to prosper, never paying for their misdeeds, while the good may experience misfortune upon misfortune.

Human beings have pondered over this paradox for at least as long as there is extant literature to record their thoughts. Part of the writer's purpose behind the biblical *Book of Job,* for instance, and its various dialogues is to highlight these strange inequalities, and man's response to them. And although it may be supposed that everything is balanced out in heaven and hell, this still does not answer the question as to why there is so much inequality in life. Right from birth, before a child has had any opportunity to commit any actions in this life, sinful or otherwise, there are differences in fortune.

Some are born into luxury, others into penury. Some are born with severe physical disabilities, others with perfect health. Some are bright and intelligent, able to make their way in life, others are dull and stupid, unable to think clearly and make even the most practical and commonsense decisions. Some are born into virtuous and spiritual families, others into the reverse. Some take birth in cultures that are irreligious, with little understanding of spiritual matters; others into cultures where there is considerable teaching on such things. The major and minor events which comprise a person's destiny all vary from individual to individual, with seemingly infinite variety. No two people live the same life.

If the events of life are supposed to be the result of the sins of the present life, logic is stretched beyond all bounds in the attempt to explain the inequalities of physical existence. The common recourse, 'God knows best' does not explain something of primary observation and concern: why is everyone so different?

An understanding of the way in which the sins of one life are carried forward in seed form within the mind, forming the fabric out of which future lives are created, brings some sense to the observation of all these differences. In fact, once this law of recompense or law of sin is fully understood, then so many other things fall into place and become understandable.

No one denies the existence of cause and effect in this world. Science is based upon an observation of it in all spheres of physical existence. The so-called laws of nature are all variations of the same fundamental law. All mathematical equations are based upon it, taking it for granted. Even when primary empirical laws cannot be formulated and scientists have to invoke the help of the laws of statistics, the same fundamental principle of cause and effect is operative, for the laws of statistics are also based upon a sense of balance and equality, on cause and effect. Philosophers and scientists alike, however, are unable to understand or explain the fundamental source of this observation of equal and opposite cause and effect.

Once it is understood that this law is actually a law of the mind, and that the law of cause and effect is operative in the world of matter because this world too is governed by or is an expression of greater and more all-encompassing aspects of the mind, then things become a little clearer. Cause and effect in matter is only a reflection of a higher principle operating within the mind, a principle which includes every event and movement that takes place, whether in the physical or mental spheres. The mind itself is the origin of causality, and souls, with their associated minds, are themselves fundamentally involved in the processes by which this law functions. In fact, the outward events of life actually come about through this hidden law of cause and effect operating at the mental level, yet manifesting as physical events. Indian thought, which encompasses reincarnation, has included all of this in its law of *karma.* An understanding of this simple principle is one of the first steps towards a universal comprehension of how things happen in the physical universe.

From a study of the teachings attributed to Jesus, there is no doubt that he taught the law of recompense for sin. In a conversation recorded in Luke's gospel, for example, he clearly indicates his belief that the events of a person's present life are due to the effect of past sins. Jesus appears to have been sitting with some of his disciples when someone mentions Pilate's recent execution or killing of a number of Galileans:

> There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
>
> *Luke 13:1–3, KJV*

Jesus says that people may think that these men had been more sinful than others. But he says that that is not the case. Everyone is in the same boat, and unless they "repent", unless they turn themselves to God, they will likewise have to face the consequences of their own actions. He then continues with another example, this time that of the entirely accidental death of eighteen people in some disaster when the "tower in Siloam fell":

> "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
>
> *Luke 13:4–5, KJV*

Jesus acknowledges that they were paying for past misdeeds, although their death was an accident and had no apparent relationship to their actions. And again, he says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Everyone will have to face the results of their own sins – in this world. This is not the traditional Christian interpretation of this passage, of course, but it is in keeping with the interpretations of the gnostic stream of early Christianity.

The extent to which Jesus taught that a person is responsible for his actions is brought out in a passage from Matthew. Speaking of the biblical injunction not to kill, Jesus says:

> Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,
> "Thou shalt not kill,"[1]
> and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.
> But I say unto you,
> that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause
> shall be in danger of the judgment.
> And whosoever shall say to his brother, *"Raca,"*
> shall be in danger of the council;
> But whosoever shall say, "Thou fool,"
> shall be in danger of hell fire.
>
> *Matthew 5:21–22, KJV*

"Raca" is an Aramaic word meaning an empty-headed person or a nitwit, while the Greek term, translated as "thou fool", to the Jew meant something considerably more abusive. It implied the worldly fool, one who is ignorant of God, who turns himself from God towards the world, a rebel against God.

Jesus is saying that all actions, from the apparently insignificant to the taking of life, must be accounted for. He is pointing out the universal extent of this principle of accountability. Everything has its reaction. Everything has to be paid for. Even an outburst of anger, or the smouldering of

resentment and hatred, bring a person into danger of judgment. Even one who verbally abuses someone else will have to pay for it.

Jesus is making the same point when he says:

Agree with thine adversary quickly,
  whiles thou art in the way with him;
Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
  and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
  and thou be cast into prison.
Verily I say unto thee,
  thou shalt by no means come out thence,
  till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Matthew 5:25–26, KJV

Prison is a term commonly used by mystics for this world where the soul is imprisoned in the cycle of birth and death. The judge is the negative power who administers this law. And from this prison no one can escape until all debts of sin or *karma* have been paid, "till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing". Escape, however, is possible, unlike the finality of hell to which traditional Christian belief consigns the souls of sinners.

Jesus is hence advising that every attempt should be made to ensure that all relationships and transactions in this world remain sweet and clear. Otherwise, the impressions pile up within the mind, and the load of sins increases, all of which have to be paid for by returning to the prison of this world.

Paul, too, taught the law of recompense for sin. As he said:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked:
  for whatsoever a man soweth,
  that shall he also reap.
For he that soweth to his flesh
  shall of the flesh reap corruption;
But he that soweth to the Spirit
  shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

And let us not be weary in well doing:
  for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
As we have therefore opportunity,
  let us do good unto all men,
  especially unto them
  who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:7–10, KJV

Likewise, in other letters, Paul reiterates his belief in this principle of cause and effect as it relates to human actions. In *2 Corinthians*, he speaks of giving in charity for the Christian cause:

> But this I say, he which soweth sparingly
> shall reap also sparingly;
> And he which soweth bountifully
> shall reap also bountifully.
> Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,
> so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity:
> For God loveth a cheerful giver.
> And God is able to make all grace abound toward you,
> that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things,
> may abound to every good work.
>
> *2 Corinthians 9:6–8, KJV*

Among other early Christian writings, there is also an intriguing comment in the *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*, where the unknown Addai points out that since the soul cannot feel in the same way as the body does, "reward and recompense" has to be undergone in the body. Though not explicitly stated, this would presumably entail reincarnation:

> For it (the soul) is not as the body, without feeling, which perceives not the odious corruption which has come upon it. Reward and recompense it (the soul) is not able to receive without it (the body); because that labour was not of it alone, but also of the body in which it dwelt.
>
> *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, DAA p.45*

The earlier Greek mystics, upon whose thinking much of Christian theology has been built, were also fully aware of the law of cause and effect. Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE), for instance, well known for his enigmatic, pithy sayings, refers to the link between destiny and personality when he says:

> A man's character is his destiny.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 69, PAC1*

Not only is a person's character destined, but that predetermined character is a part of the way in which a person does what they are destined to do. The mind of the individual and so-called external actions and events are inextricably interwoven. That is why it is said that the law of cause and effect is essentially a law of the mind, appearing in this world as a law of matter.

The third-century Neo-Platonist, Plotinus, similarly observes that the effect of one thing becomes the cause of another in a never ending continuum:

> All, then, is cause and effect, each effect becoming in turn a cause once it has taken its place among things. And perhaps this is a cause of progressive deterioration. Men, for instance, are not as they were in ancient times. With the lapse of time and the inexorable Law, the *Logos* constituting man has given up something to the characteristics of matter.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 2:3.16*

The law of cause and effect, then, at the physical level is well understood by scientists, and taken for granted by everyone. In regard to the mental and moral sphere, it is fully accredited in religious thought. But as regards its functioning as a principle of the greater mind, it is little understood, while its wider role in reincarnation is not always accepted. It must be said, however, that there is plenty of direct evidence in the ancient literature to demonstrate that many early Christians did believe in reincarnation, and they also believed that Jesus had taught it, too.

See also: **causation** (5.2), **karma**, **reincarnation**, **sakhar va'onesh**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 5:17.

ma'danīyāh (A), **ma'danīyāt** (P) *Lit.* mineral substances, the mineral kingdom; one of the seven aspects of manifestation in Islamic philosophy; also, one of the four stages of spiritual development.

See also: **'ālam al-shahādah** (4.1), **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah**.

makr al-Ḥaqq (A), **makr-i Ḥaqq** (P) *Lit.* design *(makr)* of God *(Ḥaqq);* the plan of God; God's plot, God's ruse; an expression stemming from the *Qur'ān,* where *Allāh* is called the "best of all plotters *(khayr al-mākirīn)*", implying the supremacy of the divine will:

> They (the unbelievers) plotted *(makarū)*
> and *Allāh* plotted *(makara),*
> and *Allāh* is the best of all plotters *(khayr al-mākirīn).*
>
> *Qur'ān 3:54, 8:30; cf. HQSA*

Makr al-Ḥaqq is reminiscent of the English saying, "Man proposes, God disposes." That is, for all man's schemes and plans, it is God's plot that

actually happens. *Makr al-Ḥaqq* is synonymous with *ḥīlah-'i Ḥaqq* (the design of God), an expression used by Rūmī:

> How should he please his own heart with fair designs
> who sees the design of God *(ḥīlah-'i Ḥaqq)* over them?
> He (who trusts in his own devices)
> is laying a snare within the snare (of God):
> By your life, neither this snare will escape,
> nor will that man.
> Though a hundred herbs may grow and fade,
> there will grow up at last that which God has sown.
> He (the cunning man) sowed new seed over the first seed;
> But this second seed is passing away,
> and only the first endures....
> Cast away this contrivance of yours before the Beloved –
> though your contrivance indeed is of His contriving.
> Only that which God has raised has use:
> what He has at first sown, at last grows.
> Whatever you sow, sow for His sake,
> inasmuch as you are the Beloved's captive, O lover.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:1055–58, 1060–62; cf. MJR2 p.276*

God's design is what will happen, regardless of man's schemes, says Rūmī, though even "your contrivance indeed is of His contriving," since He is the all in all, and – in the final analysis – the real doer.

maktūb (A/P) *Lit.* written; implying unalterable fate or destiny; from *kataba* (to write); a term stemming from the Eastern and Middle Eastern idea that fate is 'written on the forehead', also occurring in much earlier Christian and Jewish texts. The notion appears frequently in the *Qur'ān* in the image of the Well-Guarded Tablet *(al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ)* on which are written both the *Qur'ān,*[1] as well as the destinies of all human beings since the beginning of creation. Following the same imagery, it is said that it is the primordial, Supreme Pen *(al-Qalam al-'Alá)* which writes on the Well-Guarded Tablet. The irrevocability of the divine will is conveyed in the traditional saying: "The Pen has dried"[2] on this or that, implying, "It has been written and the Pen has dried."

The idea that everything happens according to the will of *Allāh* is fundamental to Islamic thought. As the *Qur'ān* says, using a derivative of the verb 'to write *(kataba)*':

With Him are the keys of the Unseen *(al-Ghayb),*
the treasures that none knows but He.
He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea.
Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge:
There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth,
nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered),
but is (inscribed) in a record clear *(kitābin-mubīn)*
(to those who can read).

Qur'ān 6:59; cf. AYA

Likewise, a *ḥadīth* affirms that the gender, the livelihood, disposition and the age to which a person will live are all "written" while the unborn child is still in the womb. According to the *ḥadīth,* an angel, as caretaker of the womb, refers to *Allāh* at every stage of the child's development, saying:

"My Lord, it is now a drop of semen; my Lord, it is now a clot of blood; my Lord, it has now become a lump of flesh." And when *Allāh* decides to give it a final shape, the angel says, "My Lord, would it be male or female, or would he be an evil or good person? What about his livelihood and his age?" And it is all written *(fa-yuktab)* as he is in the womb of the mother.[3]

Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, HIC 1522 (4785), SM4 46:2646

In another *ḥadīth,* Muḥammad says that it is even preordained whether a person will go to heaven or hell. *Allāh* makes it "easier" for the good to be good, and the bad to be bad:

'Alī, may *Allāh* be pleased with him, reported: "We were at a funeral in the graveyard of al-Gharqad when *Allāh*'s Messenger (may peace be upon him) came to us, sat, and we sat around him. He had a stick with him. He lowered his head and began to scratch in the earth with his stick, and then said: 'There is no one among you to whom a seat in paradise or hell has not been allotted *(kataba),* and about whom it has not been written *(kutibat)* down whether he would be an evil or a blessed person.'

"A person said, '*Allāh*'s Messenger, should we not then depend upon our destiny *(kitābinā),* and abandon our deeds?'

"Thereupon he said, 'The acts of everyone will be facilitated in that which has been created for him, so that whoever belongs to the company of the blessed will have good works made easier for him, and whoever belongs to the unfortunate ones will have evil acts made easier for him.'

"He then recited this verse (from the *Qur'ān*):

'Then, he who gives to the needy,
and guards against evil, and accepts the excellent ...
we shall make easy for him the easy end;
And who is miserly and considers himself above need,
we shall make easy for him the difficult end.'[4]"

Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, HIC 1523 (4786), SM4 46:2647;
cf. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6:60.473

See also: **forehead** (▸2), **Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ** (▸2), **Umm al-Kitāb** (3.1).

1. *Qur'ān* 85:22.
2. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 97, in *Maśnavī* V:3131 (heading), *MJR6* p.188, *MJR8* p.288; *cf. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7:62:13h.
3. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1:6.315, 8:77.594.
4. *Qur'ān* 92:5–10.

marātib al-maḥsūsah, al- (A), *Lit.* the perceptible *(maḥsūsah)* stages *(marātib);* the stages of spiritual development which bring the soul to the stage of humanity.

Within the world of phenomena, it is said that the soul progresses from the *martabat al-ma'danīyah* (stage of mineral-ness) to the *martabat al-nabātīyah* (stage of vegetable-ness), to the *martabat al-ḥayawānīyah* (stage of animal-ness), to the *martabat al-insānīyah* (stage of human-ness). *Martabat al-insānīyah* is the last stage in the *'ālam al-ṣūrah* (world of forms, the world of phenomena, the physical world), after which the soul rises into the *'ālam al-ma'nawī* (world of the spirit).

The soul or life force as it manifests in the three higher stages has been correspondingly called the *rūḥ al-nabātīyah, rūḥ al-ḥayawānī* and *rūḥ al-insānīyah* or *nafs al-nabātīyah, nafs al-ḥayawānī* and *nafs al-insānīyah.* In this context, *rūḥ* (spirit) and *nafs* (soul) are used in a general sense for life and being.

Rūmī likens the world of forms to the land, and the world of spirit to the Ocean. He likens the *marātib al-maḥsūsah* (perceptible stages) to footprints leading to the shore of the Ocean – the stage of humanity. When the soul reaches that stage, it can "be self-sacrificing", can learn to die while living *(mawt ikhtiyārī)* and enter the world of spirit:

O stubborn man, you have experienced
a hundred thousand resurrections at every moment,
from the beginning of your existence until now:

From inanimateness *(jamād),* you moved unconsciously
towards (vegetal) growth *(namā');*
And from (vegetal) growth *(namā')*
towards (animal) life *(ḥayāt)* and tribulation;
Again towards reason and goodly discernments;
Again towards what lies
outside of these five senses and six directions.

These footprints extend
as far as the shore of the Ocean *(Baḥr);*
Then the footprints disappear in the Ocean.
Because, from (divine) precaution,
the resting places *(manzil'hā)* (appointed for the traveller)
on the dry land are like villages
and dwellings and caravanserais,
While, on the contrary, the resting places *(manzil'hā)*
of the Ocean *(Daryā),* when its billows swell,
have no floor or roof (to shelter the traveller)
during his stay and detention.
These (Oceanic) stages have no visible beacon:
These resting places *(manāzil)* have neither sign nor name.
Between every two resting places *(manāzil)* Yonder,
there is a distance a hundred times as much as
from the vegetal state *(namā')* to the essential spirit.
You have seen this life in previous deaths:
Why then are you so attached to the life of the body?
Come, O crow, give up this (animal) soul *(jān)!*
Be a falcon! Be self-sacrificing
in the presence of the divine transmutation.

Rūmī, Maśnavī V:799–808; cf. MJR6 p.50

The stages of the mystical journey above the physical world of forms have no "floor or roof". Unlike the perceptible stages *(al-marātib al-maḥsūsah)* that brought the soul to the stage of humanity, they have "no visible beacon", for they are beyond the realm of the physical senses.

See also: **manzil** (4.1), **al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī** (5.1), **al-rūḥ al-insānīyah** (5.1), **al-rūḥ al-nabātīyah** (5.1), **tanāsukh**.

martabat al-insānīyah (A), **martabah-i insānīyah** (P) *Lit.* the step, rank, degree, level, grade or stage *(martabah)* of human-ness *(insānīyah);* the stage of humanity; the human level.

See **al-marātib al-maḥsūsah**.

maskh (A/P) *Lit.* transformation, metamorphosis; specifically, degradation; a transformation that degrades. *Maskh* is used generally for a fall from a higher, finer spiritual state to a lower, coarser one. Rūmī refers, for example, to the fall of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* – two angels sent to this world, where they got entangled in lust, etc. – as *maskh*. Similarly, he writes of the fall of the soul:

> Your spirit was bearing you towards the highest sphere:
> you went towards the water and the clay among the lowest.
> By this fall, you metamorphosed *(maskh)* yourself from that existence
> which was the envy of the (spiritual) intelligences.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:537–38, MJR2 p.32*

Traditional Islam does not accept the idea of reincarnation or the transmigration of souls, and there is only slight evidence of the belief among the Sufis. Among some Sufis, however, *maskh* refers to a human being reborn as an animal; *naskh* (*lit.* replacement) to a human being reborn as another human; and *faskh* (*lit.* cancellation) to a human being reborn as a plant. The *Qur'ān* also refers to men being turned into apes and swine for their unbelief. Speaking of the present ungodliness of the "People of the Book" (*i.e.* Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and some others), it says:

> Shall I tell you of a recompense with God,
> worse than that (than being ungodly)?
> Whomsoever God has cursed,
> and with whom He is wroth,
> and made some of them apes and swine
> and worshippers of idols –
> They are worse situated,
> and have gone further astray from the right way.
>
> *Qur'ān 5:60, KI*

Alluding to this story, Rūmī adds:

> In this community, there is (only) metamorphosis *(maskh)* of the spirit, but at the Resurrection the form of the spirit will be given to the body.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:2591 (heading), MJR6 p.156*

Rūmī is speaking of those who have gone back on their vows of repentance, saying that this will cause them suffering and *maskh*. Referring to the Muslim

belief that there is no bodily *maskh* of human beings being reborn as animals, he says that this *maskh* is of the "spirit", meaning the heart and mind, but that – at the time of Resurrection – such men will take the bodily form of apes or swine.

See also: **naskh al-arwāḥ**, **tanāsukh**.

metempsychosis (Gk) *Lit.* beyond *(meta)* to put a soul into *(empsychoun);* the passing of the soul at death into another body, either human or animal; transmigration.

See **reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy)**.

mìng (mìng) (C) *Lit.* fate, destiny; also called *mìng yùn* (course of destiny) and *T'iēn mìng* (mandate of Heaven); a term common to both Taoism and Confucianism, expressing the belief that everything happens by design.

In Taoism, fate is understood as the will of a universal Power and Intelligence *(Tào).* Everything happens as it should, but the interjection of desires as to how life should be causes confusion and the alternating experiences of pleasure and pain. To accept everything with equanimity, a state of mind arising spontaneously when living in harmony with *Tào* is deemed the best attitude. The classical Taoist sage, Chuāng Tzu, quotes Confucius who, he says, calls this "being whole in power":

> Confucius said, "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat – these are the alternations of the world, the workings of fate *(mìng).* Day and night, they change place before us, and wisdom cannot spy out their source. Therefore, they should not be enough to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the spirit storehouse. If you can harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy, if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, ... this is what I call being whole in power."
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 5, CTW pp.73–74*

He says that although the ups and downs of life may have to be undergone as the "workings of fate *(mìng)*", the source of fate remains a mystery: "Wisdom cannot spy out their source." The vicissitudes of life can, however, be risen above so that they no longer affect a person's peace of mind. Even though fate still has to be undergone, its effects are no longer "allowed

to enter the spirit storehouse". Everything, he infers, arises from *T'iēn mìng* (mandate of Heaven) or, more simply, "Heaven *(T'iēn)*":

> When Kūng Wén Hsüán saw the Commander of the Right, he was startled and said, "What kind of man is this? How did he come to be footless? Was it Heaven *(T'iēn)?* Or was it man?"
>
> "It was Heaven *(T'iēn),* not man," said the commander. "When Heaven *(T'iēn)* gave me life, it saw to it that I would be one-footed. Men's looks are given to them. So I know this was the work of Heaven *(T'iēn)* and not of man."
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 3, CTW p.52*

In other places, however, Chuāng Tzu also implies, conversely, that fate is not necessarily the result of the will of Heaven, although he does not really say what is the cause of fate. Once, following incessant rain for ten days, he relates, a certain Master Yǜ, concerned about the welfare of his friend Master Sūng, goes to see him, to take him some food. When Master Yǜ arrives, he finds Master Sūng in a desperate state. Master Sūng says:

> I was pondering what it is that has brought me to this extremity, but I couldn't find the answer. My father and mother surely wouldn't wish this poverty on me. Heaven covers all without partiality; Earth bears up all without partiality – Heaven and Earth surely wouldn't single me out to make me poor. I try to discover who is doing it, but I can't get the answer. Still, here I am – at the very extreme. It must be fate *(mìng).*
>
> *Chuāng Tzu 6, CTW p.91*

See also: **destiny**, **Fates**, **karma**, **qaḍā'**, **qismah**.

mīzān, al- (A/P), **tarāzū** (P) *Lit.* the balance, the scales; spiritually, the 'balance' in which God weighs man's actions; hence, a reckoning. Sufis, like other mystics, have said that every action earns for the doer a perfect recompense. A *ḥadīth* says that God held a balance *(mīzān)* in His hand in the pre-eternity, the eternity before the creation. The *Qur'ān* says:

> We sent our Apostles with clear proofs,
> and sent down along with them
> the scripture and the balance *(al-mīzān),*
> in order that men might observe due measure.
>
> *Qur'ān 57:25, in MJR8 p.174*

In other words, the apostles or divine Messengers come to speak about Reality and how to achieve it; about what righteous action is, and to point out that every action begets a recompense. Rūmī says:

> God set up these scales *(tarāzū)* for the purpose
> that justice might be done to us in eternity.
> If you give short measure, I will give short measure;
> So long as you are honest with me, I am honest with you.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1899–900; cf. MJR4 p.377*

Some Muslim philosophers have put forward the argument that since actions have no real substance, but rather are *'araḍ* (accidents), they cannot be weighed. Al-Ghazālī offers the explanation that since the balance *(al-mīzān)* is of the spiritual realms, it has the ability to weigh actions which are mere *'araḍ*, having no substance. The *Karrāmīyah*, on the other hand, explained that *Allāh* transforms insubstantial actions into substances *(ajsām)*, so that they can be weighed in the *mīzān*. Philosophical arguments aside, the point on which mystics agree is that there is a perfect and infallible reckoning for actions:

> With the scale or balance, one can separate good action from bad, and this is justice. Justice is the shadow of unity or oneness of truth, consisting of science or knowledge of religious laws *(sharī'ah)*, the spiritual path *(ṭarīqah)* and the truth *(ḥaqīqah)*. One who knows all these sciences knows the unity of the levels of concentration and dispersion (*i.e.* the oneness of the Creator with the creation).
>
> For dwellers in external levels, *mīzān* is canonical law; for dwellers in internal levels, *mīzān* is wisdom *('aql);* but a wisdom clear and brightened by divine lights. And for the exclusive ones (seekers of the Truth), *mīzān* is the path. And for the absolutely exclusive ones (perfectly realized souls), *mīzān* is the Lord's justice. Knowledge of His justice is one of many spiritual levels of a perfect man.
>
> *Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.79, in FNI3 p.158*

See also: **ḥisāb**.

Munkar (A/P) The recorder of a person's bad deeds; one of the two angels *(Nakīr* and *Munkar)* of Islamic belief who make a record of a person's good and bad deeds after death.

See also: **Nakīr**.

nabāt (A/P) (pl. *nabātāt*) *Lit.* plant; hence, the vegetable kingdom; thus, herbs, vegetation, vegetables, plants; one of seven aspects of manifestation in the visible world, these being the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, plus the stellar, solar and lunar aspects. *Nafs al-nabātīyah* or *rūḥ al-nabātīyah* refer to the vegetal or vegetative soul.

See also: **ʻālam al-shahādah** (4.1).

Nakīr (A/P) The recorder of a person's good deeds; one of the two angels who, according to Islam, make a record of a person's deeds after death. *Nakīr* records the good, while the other, *Munkar,* records the bad. Legend depicts *Munkar* and *Nakīr* as appearing immediately after death to cross-examine the deceased, each trying to prove his case for or against the dead individual.

The lover, however, rises above the duality of good and evil. In his total absorption with the divine Beloved, he has risen so completely above the body that it no longer exists for him. Thus, metaphorically, *Munkar* and *Nakīr* cannot find him:

> The lover is so wasted that even *Munkar* and *Nakīr,* the recording angels, cannot trace him in his grave.
>
> *ʻInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK5 p.166*

naskh al-arwāḥ (A), **naskh-i arvāḥ** (P) *Lit.* substitution or replacement *(naskh)* of spirits *(arwāḥ);* transmigration of spirits. While *naskh* refers to the transmigration of the soul of a human being into another human body, *maskh* (transformation) refers to transmigration from human to animal, and *faskh* (cancellation) refers to transmigration from human to plant.

Both the concept that the spirit *(rūḥ)* is eternal *(qadīm)* and that it transmigrates, taking on different material forms, are considered heretical in Islam. The *Ḥulūlī* Sufis, for instance, were declared heretics for stating that within the short-lived body was an eternal spirit that transmigrated, and that the perfected man could become God incarnate.

See also: **maskh**, **tanāsukh**.

payment Something given in return, either reward or punishment. The word is used mystically in two ways. It is either the debt incurred by past sins, payment for which is owed by a soul to the negative power, or it is the payment, also called a ransom, made by a Master on a disciple's behalf in order to release a soul from this debt.

See also: **custom**, **debt**, **head money**, **remission of sins** (▸2), **tax collectors**.

poll tax See **custom**, **head money**, **tax collectors**.

prārabdh(a) karma (S/H), **prālabdh karma** (H), **prālabdh karam** (Pu) *Lit.* commenced or begun *(prārabdha, prālabdh)* deeds *(karma);* fate or destiny *karma;* the results of deeds that were performed or begun in former lives and are allotted to the present life; that portion of an individual's *karma* which is allotted to the present life and is responsible for the present existence.

See also: **karma**.

prison, prisoner Mystics have often referred to this world as a vast prison in which the souls are prisoners. Freedom is curtailed, and life is governed by a relentless and merciless law of cause and effect *(karma)*. The many bodily forms are the individual prison cells where souls are placed without consultation or choice, and where they live lives of happiness and suffering according to their past *karma*.

The metaphor of this world as a prison, whether or not reincarnation was implied, has been used from the earliest times. Isaiah writes that God has appointed the prophet to bring light to those who live in spiritual darkness, to dispel spiritual blindness, and to free those who are imprisoned by materiality:

> I have appointed you as covenant of the people
> and light of the nations,
> to open the eyes of the blind,
> to free captives from prison,
> and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.
>
> *Isaiah 42:6–7, JB*

The same metaphor is also found in one of the well-known sayings of Jesus, where the "judge" is the negative power:

> Agree with thine adversary quickly,
> whiles thou art in the way with him;
> Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
> and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
> and thou be cast into prison.
>
> *Matthew 5:25, KJV*

There are many places in early Christian mystic literature where the meaning is more explicitly stated. In the *Acts of Thomas,* for example, Judas Thomas praises Jesus as the Saviour who "loosed all that are in (the) bondage" of sin:

Jesu Christ who neglects us not
  when we call upon you;
Who has become an opportunity for Life
  unto all mankind;
Who for us was judged
  and shut up in prison,
  and loosed all that are in bondage;
Who was called a deceiver
  yet redeemed your own from Error.

Acts of Thomas 48; cf. ANT p.387

The Master is "shut up in (the) prison" of this world, yet releases the souls who are bound to it by their sins. He is called a "deceiver" by his detractors, yet he is the one who releases souls from Error or illusion, the deception and beguilement of the devil's domain.

In the gnostic revelation, the *Apocryphon of John,* Jesus explains how he – as the *"Pronoia",* the Primal Thought or creative Power of God – came down into the "prison" of this world and of the body, gave the mystic Call to spiritual wakefulness, and sealed or baptized, with the baptism of the "five seals", the souls who had been awakened:

I am the light which exists in the Light,
  I am the remembrance of the *Pronoia* (Primal Thought) –
I went that I might enter into the midst of darkness
  and the inside of *Hadēs....*

And I entered into the midst of their prison,
  which is the prison of the body.
And I said, "He who hears, let him get up from the deep sleep."

And he (man) wept and shed tears.
Bitter tears he wiped from himself, and he said,
"Who is it that calls my name,
  and from where has this hope come to me,
  while I am in the chains of the prison?" ...

And I raised him up and sealed him
  in the light of the Water with five seals,

in order that death might not have power over him
from this time on.

Apocryphon of John 30–31; cf. NHS33 pp.171, 173, 175

The writer of the Manichaean writings found in Chinese Turkestan, petitioning Jesus for release from birth and death and bondage to physical forms in this world, also speaks of the "carnal body" as a prison. "Cangues" are large wooden collars formerly worn by petty criminals in China as a punishment:

It still causes me trouble and difficulty even now:
cangues, chains, imprisonment, and bonds steadily ensnare me,
making me now as though mad and then as though intoxicated.

Manichaean Hymns, LSMH p.178:27

Likewise, in the Manichaean hymn cycles in Parthian, the poet begs for release from the "prisons", dungeons, hells or pits of reincarnation in this world. In these hymns, he is finally answered by the Master or Saviour who speaks to the soul in a very loving and compassionate manner:

From each dungeon shall I release you,
bearing you afar from all wounds and afflictions.
I shall lead you forth from this torture.
No more will you feel fear at each encounter....

Beloved! Beauty of my bright nature!
From these shall I lead you forth, and from all prisons.
I shall save you from all perdition,
and free you forever from all wounds.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:32–33, 42–43; cf. MHCP pp.142–45

Speaking of the release from endless rebirth, the Saviour describes the various bodily forms of this world as "every choking prison" and the "dwelling of death":

All the pangs you have suffered in hell,
you have undergone for this,
in the outset and beginning.

Come yet nearer, in gladness without regret:
lie not content in the dwelling of death.
Turn not back, nor regard the shapes of the bodies,
which lie there in wretchedness,
they and their fellows.

See, they return through every rebirth,
through every agony and every choking prison.
See, they are reborn among all kinds of creatures,
and their voice is heard in burning sighs.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:1–9; cf. MHCP pp.154–57

And the soul responds in gratitude for being "saved" from "prison":

The Saviour of my soul revealed these things to me....
Upon that day of departing, he came with mercy to me,
and saved me from every anguish and prison.
Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān VII:10–11, MHCP pp.104–7

Sufi mystics have used the same metaphor. Rūmī writes that everyone here is a prisoner:

All the people of this world are prisoners,
awaiting the stroke of death
in a place that is passing away;
Except, to be sure, in the rare case of one ...
whose body is in the prison
but his soul in the seventh heaven.
Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:3404–5; cf. MJR6 p.446

He recommends digging a hole in this "prison", and effecting "an escape":

An evil resort sought he that sought this world:
a good state sought he that sought the world to come.
Plans for gaining the things of this world are worthless:
Plans for renouncing this world are inspired (by God).
The right plan is that the prisoner
digs an escape hole out of his prison;
If he blocks up the hole, that is a foolish plan.
This world is the prison, and we are the prisoners:
dig a hole in the prison and let yourself out!
What is the world? – To be forgetful of God.
It is not merchandise and silver and weighing scales and women.
Rūmī, Maśnavī I:979–83; cf. MJR2 p.55

See also: **bandhan**, **bandīvān**, **captives**, **freedom**, **sijn**.

Pul-i Ṣirāṭ (P) *Lit.* bridge *(pul)* + way or path *(ṣirāṭ)*. In the *Qur'ān*, *ṣirāṭ* means the straight path, the right path, the narrow path. According to Muslim

tradition, the dead have to pass over the *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ,* a bridge to heaven, built over hell, that is narrower than a hair, and sharper than the edge of a razor. The righteous cross it easily, but sinners miss their footing and fall down into the fire of hell.

The *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ* is sometimes seen as a metaphor for keeping to the 'middle path', following a path of balance and moderation while striving for spiritual uplift:

> This bridge is said to be narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword. For in every action, the middle path is the straight way and the way of wisdom. Indulgence and squandering belong to the world of nature, which is hell. So, one ought to keep the middle way, which is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword.
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 3:8, IK p.64*

The myth of a bridge over which the dead must pass has antecedents in both Greek and Middle Eastern legend. The idea would seem to be symbolic, designed to impress upon man that he has to render an account of his deeds. Zarathushtra referred to a similar myth that was prevalent at his time: the *Chinvatō Peretū* (Bridge of Judgment) over which all the dead must pass.

Many mystics have also described the path of love as walking on the edge of a razor. It means that in true mystic love there is room only for one – the Beloved. The lover has to efface all trace of ego or personal identity. Hence, Bulleh Shāh likens the path of love to the *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ.* One thought of self precipitates the devotee back into the hell of ego and this world:

> The first rung of love is like the *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ.*
>
> *Bulleh Shāh, Qānūn-i 'Ishq 16, QI p.127; cf. BS p.445*

More generally, Sufis have likened the soul's passage through this world to the crossing of the *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ:*

> In *Ṣūfī* literature, *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ* indicates the difficulties to be faced in the intensely fearful valleys on the spiritual path.
>
> *Rūzbihān, Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥiyāt, CPS p.223, in FLI p.215*

Nasafī writes in a similar vein:

> Know that the ascent and descent of a human soul is similar to crossing the *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ.* This bridge over hell is narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword. Some cross this bridge quickly and easily, and they encounter no troubles. Some cross it painfully, falling and getting

up again and, though it is a difficult task, finally cross over it. Some cannot cross this bridge, and so fall into hell.

The ascent and descent of the human soul is in a similar manner, for the world of nature (phenomenal world) is similar to hell. Souls come into this world and pass through it. Some pass easily, some with difficulty, and some cannot pass through it at all. Those that remain caught in the world of nature cannot be united with the higher world.

Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 3:8, IK pp.63–64

And likewise Anṣārī:

The *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ* is the face and scale of justice:
walk over the Lord's *Ṣirāṭ* carefully.

Anṣārī, in Kashf al-Asrār, KA1 p.35, in FLI p.531

See also: **Chinvatō Peretū, Styx, Vaitaraṇī.**

qaḍā' (A), **qażā'** (P) *Lit.* judgment; divine decree or law; also, death, destiny, fate. *Qaḍā'* is the universal, eternal and absolute divine decree, while *qadar* is that decree as applied to individuals in time and space. Rūmī describes the inexorable force of *qażā':*

Do not grapple with destiny *(qażā'),* O fierce and furious one,
lest destiny *(qażā')* also pick a quarrel with you.
One must be dead in presence of the Decree of God *(Ḥukm-i Ḥaqq),*
so that no blow may come from "the Lord of the daybreak".[1]

Rūmī, Maśnavī 1:910–11, MJR2 p.51

Qażā' is the hidden cause of everything – pleasant and unpleasant, good and evil. Is God, then, the author of sin and evil? Recognizing that even man's sins and wrongdoing are within the scope of *qażā',* Muslim philosophers have therefore tried to accommodate the paradox by making a distinction between God's *al-Amr al-takwīnī* (the creative Command), which, like *qażā',* is the hidden cause of all actions, and *al-Amr al-taklīfī* (the religious Command, the instructing Command), which qualifies some actions as good and others as bad. Likewise, Muslim philosophy makes a distinction between acceptance of the decree *(qażā')* and the thing decreed *(maqżī).* Rūmī expresses the mystic's perspective on this knotty problem:

This infidelity is the thing ordained *(maqżī),*
it is not the ordainment *(qażā');*
This infidelity is truly the effects of the ordainment *(qażā').*

Therefore, distinguish, sire,
the ordainment from the thing ordained,
so that your difficulty may be removed at once....

The ugliness of the script is not the ugliness of the artist;
Nay, 'tis an exhibition of the ugly by him.
The skill of the artist is that
he can make both the ugly and the beautiful.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1367–68, 1372–73; cf. MJR4 p.77

However, Rūmī cautions that the reality of this cannot be explained in words and by intellectual discussion. Indeed, intellectual exercise can destroy the sweetness of divine love:

If I develop the investigation of this methodically,
so that question and answer become lengthy,
the savour of love's mystery will go from me,
the form of piety will be deformed.

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1374–75, MJR4 p.77

See also: **destiny**, **karma**, **mìng**, **qadar**, **al-Qalam**, **qismah**.

1. *Qur'ān* 113:1.

qadar (A/P) *Lit.* power, constriction, force; hence, predetermination, predestination. *Qadar* is God's action in predetermining the destiny of a man's life; it is the divine will expressed in the life of an individual, as opposed to the universal divine will *(qażā')*. In some usages it can be equated with a man's portion, part or fate. As it is expressed through an individual's life, it is sometimes equated with human will:

When these two powers, the *qażā'* or universal, the *qadar* or individual, are working harmoniously, things come right. But when they clash, that which is thought right by *qażā'* will happen without regard to what *qadar* may think right or wrong. Those who know this, and harmonize their will with *qażā',* the universal will, begin to experience divine impulses, and they begin to feel every time what is and what is not harmonious in the *qadar* also.

'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK7 p.120

See also: **qaḍā'**.

Qalam, al-, al-Qalam al-'Alá (A), **Qalam-i Avval, Qalam-i 'Alá** (P) *Lit.* the Pen *(al-Qalam);* the Supreme *('Alá)* Pen; the First or Primal *(Avval)* Pen; a *qalam* is a reed pen, from the Greek *kalamos,* meaning the same. *Al-Qalam* appears in the *Qur'ān* as the means by which *Allāh* teaches man of his ignorance:

> Thy Lord is the Most Generous,
> who taught by the Pen *(al-Qalam),*
> taught Man that he knew not.
>
> *Qur'ān 96:4–6, KI*

The Pen is also invoked in the *Qur'ān* as testimony that Muḥammad was not mad, as his detractors insisted, but taught by the grace of God:

> By the Pen *(al-Qalam)* and by what men write,
> you are not, by the blessing of your Lord,
> a man possessed.
> Truly, you will have a reward unfailing;
> Truly, you stand upon an exalted standard of morality.
> So you will see, and they will see,
> which of you is demented.
>
> Truly, your Lord knows very well
> those who have strayed from His way,
> and He knows very well those who walk straight.
>
> *Qur'ān 68:1–7*

In neither instance, however, is the meaning of *al-Qalam* explicitly given, and interpretations therefore vary.

In Islamic tradition, everything is decreed or 'written' by *Allāh.* According to Nasafī, God's Pen is the *'Aql-i Avval* (Primal Intelligence), the divine creative power by which everything in creation happens and is sustained in existence. He calls this the "sea of light", and he calls the firmament of this world the "sea of darkness",[1] going on to say that when God addressed the Pen *(Qalam)* to write upon the sea of darkness:

> The Pen *(Qalam)* asked, "Write what, my Lord?"
>
> It was told, "Write everything which was, is, and will be until the day of resurrection."
>
> So the Pen *(Qalam)* wrote: "Verily, God Most Exalted has created beings from the darkness, and will give them growth through His light, and will guide them with that light out of the darkness."
>
> *Nasafī, al-Insān al-Kāmil 17:1, IK p.221*

Metaphorically, the Supreme Pen is the force that shapes destiny: it is the Pen that writes on the Well-Guarded Tablet *(al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ),* upon which all destiny is written. The irrevocability of the divine will is conveyed by the *ḥadīth,* "The Pen has dried,"[2] implying, "It has been written, and the Pen has dried." Rūmī interprets this saying to mean that for every action there is a consequence. The intention of the saying is to stimulate a desire to follow the spiritual path:

> The correct interpretation of "the Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried"
> is that this tradition is to encourage
> the most important work of all (spiritual work).
> Therefore, the Pen *(al-Qalam)* wrote that every action
> has the effect and consequence appropriate to it.
>
> The Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried after writing
> that if you do wrong, wrong will come to you,
> and if you act rightly, the result will be happiness.
> If you behave unjustly, you are damned:
> the Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried on that.
> If you show justice, you eat that fruit:
> the Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried on that.
> When any one steals, his hand is cut off:
> the Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried on that.
> When he drinks wine, he becomes intoxicated:
> the Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried on that.
>
> Do you really imagine that after His first Decree,
> God should say, like a person dismissed from office:
> "The affair is now out of my hands:
> do not approach me so often,
> do not entreat me so much"?
>
> No, the meaning is:
> "The Pen *(al-Qalam)* has dried on this and that:
> justice and injustice are not equal in my sight.
> I have laid down a distinction between good and evil;
> I have also laid down a distinction
> between the bad and the worse."
>
> If there be in you a single mote of self-discipline
> in excess of your companion, the grace of God will know,
> and will bestow on you that mote's amount of superiority:
> The mote will step forth to meet you as big as a mountain.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:3131–41, MJR6 pp.188–89*

From a higher point of view, the Pen, like *Umm al-Kitāb* (Mother of the Book) in which the Pen writes, is perhaps a metaphor for the power by which God spiritually conveys His message to the seeker. Rūmī also seems to be using the term in this way when he quotes from the *Qur'ān,* counselling his reader to become pure and blank like a sheet of white paper, so that the Word of God may be written upon the soul or sown within it like a seed:

> Be, O brother, a place unsown;
> Be a white paper untouched by writing,
> that you may be ennobled by "the Pen *(al-Qalam)*",[3]
> and that the Gracious One may sow seed within you.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:1963–64; cf. MJR6 pp.117–18*

See also: **Umm al-Kitāb** (3.1).

1. Nasafī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil* 17:1, *IK* pp.220–21.
2. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 97; *cf. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 7:62:13h.
3. *Qur'ān* 68:1.

qismah (A), **qismat** (P) *Lit.* apportionment, division, portion, share; this is the meaning as it appears in the *Qur'ān,*[1] but coming to mean fate, lot, destiny and, hence, the will of *Allāh;* anglicized as 'kismet'. Ḥāfiẓ writes that fate is like a "compass" needle in which man is the fixed centre point of resignation. Everything is laid out for him, and he has no option which way to turn. Everything is in the hands of the Divine:

> In the compass of our fate *(qismat),*
> we are the (centre) point.
> Your grace is whatever You give;
> Your order, whatever You want.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.235, DHM (504:6) p.452, DIH p.374; cf. DHWC (498:4) p.818*

In common with many other mystics, 'Ināyat Khān says that a person's fate is created by his own thoughts:

> *Qismat* as it is called in the East, is formed by our thought. Thoughts have prepared for us that happiness or unhappiness which we experience. The whole of mysticism is founded on this.
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK7 p.134*

See also: **destiny, karma, mìng, qaḍā', al-Qalam**.

1. *e.g. Qur'ān* 4:8, 53:22, 54:28.

Rashnu (Av) *Lit.* justice, rectitude; also, a judge; the *yazata* (deity) of justice, regarded as the most just, most kind and most beautiful; he who weighs good and evil in the balance, showing no favour to either side; also, an epithet of the *yazata, Mithra.* I.R.S. Taraporewala writes:

> *Rashnu* means justice. His justice is strict and mathematically precise. All the good and evil thoughts, words and deeds are weighed in the balance and the destination of the departed soul is determined from this.... In some rare cases, when the balance is exact between good and evil, the soul is left hovering midway between heaven and hell. This last idea, however, was developed in later days.
>
> The justice meted out is governed by the universal law of action and reaction, what the Hindus call the law of *karma.* In the faiths of India, the doctrine of rebirth is also put forward as a sort of corollary to the law of *karma.* But in Zoroastrian thought, although the law of *karma* is clearly laid down, the idea of rebirth is not mentioned explicitly, except in one place, which speaks of souls coming back to the "abode of untruth",[1] namely to this world of human life. There are several other passages where rebirth might be understood by implication.
>
> *I.R.S. Taraporewala, Zoroastrian Morals, ZM p.11*

1. Zarathushtra, *Yasna* 49:11.

reincarnation The incarnation of a soul in successive physical bodies, human or otherwise; generally understood to be the result of actions of a previous life or lives, good or bad. The process is one of cause and effect, known in Indian languages as *karma.*

An understanding of reincarnation and even transmigration into lower forms is fundamental to many religions and schools of mysticism. The ancient Egyptians were convinced of it; Zarathushtra may have taught it; and many of the Greek philosopher-mystics of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries BCE believed in it, including Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Empedoclēs, Socratēs and Plato. The first-century Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus (*c.*205–270 CE) and the Neo-Platonists, the Hermeticists, the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī, and his successors, the Jain *Tīrthakaras* (Saints), the Buddha (c.560–480 BCE), Guru Nānak (1469–1539) and the line of *Gurus* following him (1539–1708) which gave rise to the Sikh religion, together with a galaxy of Indian mystics, yogis and Vedantists, some among the Sufis, and many, many others all have taught the reality of reincarnation. Included among them are a number of cultures who lacked a written tradition such as the Celts and Druids of ancient Europe, and other native peoples around the world.

The philosophy existed in Judaism, too, though it has never been an integral part of the religion. It is possible that the Essenes accepted it, since they taught the immortality of the soul and its escape from the bodily prison. And the first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, reports that rewards in an afterlife followed by a new life on earth, at least of the virtuous, was also an accepted doctrine in Pharisaism, though there is some scholarly debate over whether Josephus is referring to reincarnation or resurrection. Later Jewish mystics from the period of the Kabbalah taught a form of it, and it was also a part of the doctrine of the eighteenth-century *Ḥasidim* of Poland and Germany.

Many of the early Christians, especially among the gnostic schools, believed that Jesus had taught reincarnation, as did many later Christians, including the medieval Cathars, Bogomils and Albigensians.

See also: **āvāgaman, chaurāsī, gilgul, karma, reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy), reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity), reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism), reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism), reincarnation and transmigration (in Mithraism), tanāsukh.**

reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy) (Gk. *metempsychosis*) The belief that after the death of the body, the soul passes into some other bodily form was prevalent in ancient Greek philosophy. The Greeks had an ancient mystical tradition of which the indestructibility, immortality and reincarnation of the soul were essential aspects. Pythagoras (*b.c.*580 BCE), Heraclitus (*c.*535–475 BCE), Empedoclēs (*c.*490–430 BCE), Socratēs (*c.*470–399 BCE), Plato (*c.*427–347 BCE), and many others all believed in and taught reincarnation. Greek influence in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries was considerable. Even before the time of Alexander (*c.*356–323 BCE), Hellenistic philosophy and culture had spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, maintaining an influence until well into the Christian era.

The Greek historian, Herodotus (*c.*485–425 BCE), sometimes described as the father of modern history, said that the Greeks learned of reincarnation from the Egyptians:

> The Egyptians were the first to teach that the soul is immortal, and that at the death of the body, it enters into some other living creature that may be ready to receive it; and that when it has gone the round of all created forms on land, in water and in the air, ... then it once more enters a human body born for it; and that this cycle of existence

for the soul takes place in three thousand years. Some of the Greeks adopted this opinion, some earlier, others later, as if it were their own.

Herodotus, History II:123, HH1 p.424; cf. HH1 p.425

The early Christian father, Jerome (*c.*347–420), who was clearly antithetical to the doctrine, repeats the same: "This godless and wicked teaching was formerly rife in Egypt and the East."[1] However, although Egypt was regarded as a principal centre of esoteric wisdom in the ancient world, supporting evidence for a belief in reincarnation in extant ancient Egyptian literature is minimal. Modern scholars have therefore expressed uncertainty concerning Herodotus' assertion. Jerome's evidence is also inconclusive since he may have drawn his information from Herodotus or from the prevailing opinion of his times. It is possible, however, if not probable, that reincarnation was a part of the secret oral teachings divulged only to initiates of the Egyptian 'mysteries'. As the Christian writer Arnobius (*fl.c.*300 CE) reports, this was certainly true of the Greek and "pagan" mysteries:

(It) is said in the more hidden mysteries, that the souls of the wicked go into cattle and other beasts after they have been removed from human bodies.

Arnobius, Against the Pagans 2:16, ASP1 p.130

The earliest phase of the Greek mystical tradition is associated with Orpheus, though the stories surrounding him are so interwoven with myth and legend that there is some doubt whether he was ever a historical character. If he did live, it would probably have been around 1500 BCE, and certainly before the time of Homer (*c.*800 BCE).

Orphic teachings introduced a leavening of spirituality into the form of *Bacchus* worship prevalent in those times. Tenets included the transmigration of souls, with a belief in a governing law of cause and effect, binding souls to a circle of endless births and deaths. The Orphics said that man is part earth, part heaven, and that the heavenly part could be developed by leading a pure life. The goal of human life was therefore purification. In common with most mystical teachings that include reincarnation, animal foods were to be avoided. Ultimately, the intention was for the soul to become one with *Bacchus,* as the supreme Deity, experiencing the ecstasy of union with the Divine. The soul could then be called a *Bacchus,* and be freed from birth and death. As an Orphic fragment states:

Fate … conquered me….
But I flew out from the hard
  and deeply painful circle.

Orphic Fragment 18; cf. ASP p.5

Pythagoras (*b.c.*580 BCE), who followed Orpheus many centuries later, is the first of the Greek mystics known to history. Although his life story is also hedged about with uncertainty and legend, there is no doubt that he existed. Historically, he is generally regarded as a reformer of Orphism, making it clearly mystical. He believed in the unseen unity and reality of God, the visible world being false and illusory. And he, too, taught that the soul is immortal, but has to pass through the cycle of birth and death.

Many centuries later, in early Christian times, those who followed the esoteric path of Greek philosophy were generally known as Pythagoreans, and a body of teaching attributed to Pythagoras was still extant. Hippolytus, the early-third-century Bishop of Rome, writes:

> Pythagoras says that ... the souls of animals ... are mortal when they are in the body, just as if buried, as it were, in a tomb: whereas, we are separated from our bodies and become immortal when we rise (out of this world). Thus, Plato, being asked by someone, "What is philosophy?" replied, "It is a separation of soul from the body."
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VI:20; cf. RAH p.220*

In this context, a philosopher *(philosophos)* is a lover of wisdom *(philosophos),* where spiritual or esoteric wisdom is implied. This is the original meaning of philosopher and philosophy. Hippolytus also observes:

> When, therefore, he (Pythagoras) says, you depart, that is, when you go forth from the body, do not earnestly crave for it once more. For if you are eagerly desirous for it, the passions will once more confine you within the body. Such sayings presuppose that there is a transition of souls from one body to another, as also Empedoclēs, adopting the principles of Pythagoras, affirms.
>
> For, says he, souls that are lovers of pleasure, as Plato states[2] – if, when they are in the condition of suffering attendant upon man, they do not follow the pathways of philosophy – must then pass through the forms of all animals and plants before they can return again into the human body.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VI:21; cf. RAH pp.220–21*

The fourth-century (CE) Neo-Platonist, Iamblichus, confirms the same belief:

> He (Pythagoras) knew what his soul was, and whence it came into the body, and also its former lives, and that of these things he gave most evident indications.
>
> *Iamblichus, Life of Pythagoras 28, ILP p.72*

Likewise, the Roman poet Ovid (*c*.43 BCE – 17 CE) wrote in the section of his *Metamorphoses* relating to Pythagoras:

> Death has no power th' immortal soul to slay,
> that when its present body turns to clay,
> seeks a fresh home, and with unlessened might
> inspires another frame with life and light....
>
> Souls cannot die. They leave a former home,
> and in new bodies dwell, and from them roam.
> Nothing can perish, all things change below,
> for spirits through all forms may come and go.
>
> Good beasts shall rise to human forms, and men,
> if bad, shall backward turn to beasts again.
> Thus, through a thousand shapes, the soul shall go,
> and thus fulfil its destiny below.
>
> *Ovid, Metamorphoses 15:158–59, 165–68, tr. Dryden, in RFT p.194*

Many Greek mystics and philosophers after Pythagoras also taught reincarnation. Heraclitus (*c*.535–475 BCE), noted for his enigmatic sayings, is probably implying reincarnation when he speaks of the law of cause and effect which governs rebirth:

> Justice will overtake fabricators of lies and false witnesses.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 71, HPW p.68*

He also indicates that there will be some surprises in the afterlife:

> Such things await men after they are dead,
> which they neither expect nor imagine.
>
> *Heraclitus, Fragment 67, PAC2*

Empedoclēs (*c*.490–430 BCE) is also well known for the belief. Hippolytus explains that, according to Empedoclēs, transmigration is the punishment of the "Demiurge" or "Discord", but that souls are rescued by the good power, "Friendship":

> For souls 'change', body after body being altered, and are punished by Discord, not being permitted to continue for long in one frame. Souls are thus involved in all possible forms of punishment by Discord through being changed from body to body.... This is the punishment which the Demiurge inflicts....

> The souls, then, thus detested and tormented and punished in this world, are, according to Empedoclēs, collected by Friendship as being a certain Good (power), and One that pities the groaning of these (souls) and (their enthralment by) the disorderly and wicked devices of furious Discord. And (likewise, Friendship is) eager and (also) instructed to lead forth souls from the world, little by little, and to domesticate them with unity, in order that all things, being conducted by herself, may attain oneness.
>
> *Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies VII:17; cf. RAH pp.294–95*

This assertion of Hippolytus is supported by the comparatively few remaining fragments of the writings of Empedoclēs:

> For I have at times already been a boy and a girl,
> and a bush and a bird and a mute fish in the salty waves.
>
> *Empedoclēs, Fragment 117, EHL p.119*

> There is a law of necessity (fate), an old decree of the gods,
> eternal, bound by the most solemn oaths.
> Whoever fouls his limbs by unwitting involvement in murder,
> or swears an oath and then perjures himself,
> the gods, whose lot is a long life,
> sentence him to wander in exile, away from the blessed ones,
> taking on all kinds of shapes of mortal life,
> tormented by heavy toil,
> and to struggle for three times ten thousand seasons.
>
> For the force of the air chases him towards the high seas;
> The sea spews him out towards the threshold of the earth;
> And the earth tosses him towards the sun's shining splendour;
> He in turn hurls him into the whirling of the air.
> Thus, one receives him from the other, and they all loathe him.
>
> One of these I am now,
> a fugitive from the gods and a vagrant,
> having yielded to the enticements of raging Discord.
>
> *Empedoclēs, Fragment 115; cf. EHL p.122*

> Hence, suffering from heavy misfortunes, you will never,
> I think, be free from grievous pains.
>
> *Empedoclēs, Fragment 145, EHL p.132*

However, after passing through the labyrinth of transmigration, Empedoclēs also says that souls do ultimately reach a higher birth:

In the end, they become seers, composers of hymns,
and physicians and leaders of men on earth;
From these (states), they sprout up again
as gods immortal, honoured above all....
Sharing the hearth and board of the other immortals,
untouched by human ills, set apart, not subject to decay.

Empedoclēs, Fragments 146, 147, EHL p.130

The great Plato, regarded as the father of modern philosophy, also speaks of transmigration in his dialogues. Although many Western scholars have sought to distance both themselves and Plato from the belief, there is little reason to believe that it was not taught both by Plato and his teacher Socratēs. It was a common enough belief in the ancient world, and Plato gives every indication that he personally espouses it. In *Phaedo,* Socratēs (*c.*470–399 BCE) describes transmigration as a circle of "repayment":

> If there were not an eternal repayment in the generation of some things for other things, revolving in a circle, ... do you realize that all things would ultimately have the same form? ... Wouldn't it be inevitable that everything would ultimately be dead, and nothing would live? ... There really is such a thing as coming to life again, living people are generated from the dead, and the souls of the dead exist.
>
> *Plato, Phaedo 72a–e*

And:

> (The souls of the wicked) are compelled to wander ... as a punishment for their bad conduct in the past. They continue wandering until at last, through craving for the things of body, which unceasingly pursues them, they are imprisoned once more in a body. And, as you might expect, they are attached to the same sort of character or nature which they have developed.
>
> *Plato, Phaedo 80d–84b*

In *Timaeus,* Plato's protagonist, Timaeus, relates a complex creation story, much of which must be taken allegorically. The Creator fashions souls in a number equal to the stars. Assigning to each soul a star, He mounts them all upon their respective stars, "as on a chariot", and shows them the universe and the laws that will govern them. The souls are then sent into earthly bodies made of fire, water, earth and air, according to the Greek elemental view of nature. There they are provided with the positive and negative attributes of human nature – "desire, with its offspring of pain and pleasure, together with

fear and anger, and the feelings which are their opposites". Mastery of these attributes will lead to a good and happy life, while giving in to them will lead to a life of wickedness. Timaeus then explains:

> And he who lived well for his appointed time was to return home to his appointed star, where he would live a blessed and happy existence. But if he failed to do so, in his second birth he would pass into a woman. And if, under those circumstances, he still did not refrain from wickedness, he would change into some animal befitting his particular evil nature. And he would have no respite from change and suffering until he permitted the motion of the harmonious within him to subdue the multitude of tumultuous feelings which had clung to him since his association with fire, water, air and earth, and, with the *Logos* once more in control, return to his first and better state.
>
> *Plato, Timaeus 42b–c*

The exposition in *Timaeus* highlights the fact that various beliefs – some seemingly bizarre to modern minds – existed in the ancient world concerning reincarnation and the destiny of the soul. Some thought that the soul had a limited number of opportunities in a physical form, or that birth and death was in other ways circumscribed or limited to a particular span of time. This concept is found in what is perhaps the most striking of Plato's accounts of transmigration – the vision of Er. Of such significance does Plato hold the doctrine of reincarnation that he chooses to end his great dialogue, the *Republic,* with this story, as a reminder to his readers that all deeds – good and bad – are accountable.

The story is narrated by Plato's usual protagonist, Socratēs. The Pamphylian warrior, Er, son of Armenius, is slain in battle. But when the corpses of the dead are collected on the tenth day, it is noted that the body of Er has not begun to decompose. Even so, he is taken home, and preparations are made for the cremation; but on the twelfth day, his body now lying on the funeral pyre, Er opens his eyes. Fully revived, he goes on to describe what he has seen in the other world. In modern terms, Er has been unconscious, perhaps in a coma and, while in that state, he has had a near-death experience.

On his apparent death, the soul of Er, along with many others, is taken to a place of judgment; after which, some souls ascend to heaven, while others descend to the nether worlds:

> He said that when his soul left the body he went on a journey with a great company, and that they came to a mysterious place where there were two openings side by side in the earth; and above and opposite them in the heaven were two other openings. In the space between,

> were seated judges, who bade the just, after they had passed judgment on them, ascend by the right-hand way to heaven, bearing signs attached to their front of the judgment passed upon them. And in like manner, the unjust were bidden by them to descend by the left-hand, lower way, they also bearing the symbols of their deeds, but fastened on their backs.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:614b–d; cf. CDP p.839, DP2 p.492*

Er steps forward to receive judgment, but is advised that he is only present as an observer. He then sees other souls descending from heaven, and others ascending from the nether worlds, "beneath the earth":

> Er drew near, but they told him that he was to be the messenger who would carry the report of the other world to mankind, and they bade him hear and see all that was to be heard and seen in that place. He said that he then saw, on one side, souls departing through one pair of the openings in heaven and earth when sentence had been passed upon them; while at the other pair of openings, other souls were arriving, some ascending out of the earth dusty and worn with travel, some descending out of heaven clean and bright. And arriving ever and anon, they seemed to have come from a long journey, and they went forth with gladness into the meadow, where they encamped as at a festival. And those who knew one another embraced and conversed, the souls which had come up from below the earth curiously inquiring about the things above, and the souls which had come from heaven about the things beneath. And they told their stories to one another, those from below weeping and wailing at the remembrance of the things which they had endured and seen in their journey beneath the earth – which had lasted a thousand years – while those from above described heavenly delights and visions of beauty beyond words.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:614d–615a; cf. CDP p.839, DP2 p.492*

Er then describes how the souls coming up from the nether worlds have been there for a thousand years, regarded as ten times the span of a human life. There they have suffered retribution ten times over for their misdeeds. Likewise, the rewards enjoyed in heaven for "beneficence and justice and holiness" are paid ten times over. Stories are also related by the souls who have just ascended of those who had been great tyrants or criminals on earth and who, after the passage of one thousand years of punishment and torture, had expected release. But as they attempt to ascend, the mouth of the cavern "lets out a roar", at which "wild men of fiery aspect" appear, binding and torturing the unfortunate ones, dragging them through thorns, to be "taken

away and cast into hell", all the while recounting their misdeeds to the passers-by.

After a period of seven days in the meadow, the souls are obliged to continue on their journey until they come to a place where they can see the whole universe, with the stars, the sun, the moon and the five known planets, all revolving in circles around the spindle of Necessity. And, "On the upper surface of each circle is a siren, who goes around with them, hymning a single tone or note." Also arranged around this spindle are the "three Fates, daughters of Necessity, clothed in white robes with chaplets on their heads". They, too, are singing: *Lachesis* of the past, *Clotho* of the present, and *Atropos* of the future.

The souls must now present themselves to *Lachesis*, who will propel them into rebirth. But, before doing so, they must choose their next life. For this purpose, they are met by a "prophet" – an attendant of the Fates – who takes a selection of numbered tickets and the outlines of various potential lives from the lap of *Lachesis*, and tells the assembled souls how the choice of lives will be made. The "guardian spirit" which he mentions is a Greek belief of the times – a personal spirit guide who attends an individual from birth to death:

> "Hear the word of *Lachesis*, the daughter of Necessity. Souls who live but for a day, now is the beginning of a new cycle of life and mortality, where birth is the herald of death. No guardian spirit shall choose the tickets for you, but you shall later select your own guardian spirit. Let him who draws ticket number one be the first to choose a life, and the life which he chooses shall be his destiny. But virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her, he will have more or less of her; the responsibility is with the chooser – God is blameless."
>
> So saying, the prophet flung the tickets out among them all, and each of them took up the ticket which fell nearest to him – all but Er himself, for he was not allowed – and each as he took his ticket clearly saw the number which he had drawn. Then the prophet placed on the ground before them the outlines of lives, many more than the souls present. And they were of all varieties: lives of every kind of animal and all sorts of human lives. There were tyrannies among them, some lasting throughout the tyrant's life, others which broke off in the middle, coming to an end in poverty and exile and beggary. There were lives of men who were famous, some for their form and beauty as well as for their strength and success in games or, again, for their birth and the virtue of their ancestors; and others who were notorious for the opposite qualities; and of women likewise. However, no definitive personality was associated with these lives, because each soul would naturally bring with it its own characteristics. But all other

> things were mixed together, along with the elements of wealth and poverty, and disease and health, and the intermediate conditions.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:617d–618b; cf. CDP pp.841–42, DP2 pp.495–96*

Plato, through Socratēs, then makes a case for developing an understanding of what truly leads to a good and noble life, and what leads to a life of infamy, so that a soul may make the right choice at this time. Er then continues with the advice of the prophet, followed by a description of the motivations underlying the souls' choice of their future lives, and ending with the choices made by various well-known characters from Greek mythology:

> "Even for the last to step forward, if he chooses wisely and lives diligently, a happy and not undesirable existence is reserved. Let not the first to choose be heedless, and let not the last despair." Having thus spoken, he who had the first choice immediately sprang forward and chose the greatest tyranny. His mind being darkened by folly and sensuality, he chose without sufficient forethought, failing at first sight to observe that he was fated, among other evils, to eat his own children. But when he had had time to reflect, and saw what was in his lot, he began to beat his breast and bewail his choice, forgetting that he had been forewarned by the prophet. For instead of throwing the blame for his misfortune on himself, he accused fortune and the gods, and everything else but himself. Now he was one of those who had come down from heaven, and in a former life had lived in a well-ordered State, where his virtue had been a matter of habit only, not arising from the love of wisdom (*lit.* philosophy).
>
> And this was true of others who were similarly overtaken: the majority of them came from heaven and had therefore never been schooled by adversity, whereas the pilgrims who had come up from below the earth, having themselves suffered and seen others suffer, were in no hurry to choose. And owing to this inexperience of theirs, and also because the allocation of the ticket was by chance, many souls exchanged a good destiny for an evil one or an evil one for a good. For if a man had always, from his arrival on earth, dedicated himself from the outset to the love of wisdom, and had been moderately fortunate in the number of his ticket, he would, as the messenger reported, have been happy here. Moreover, his journey after life and his return to the world, instead of being rough and through the nether worlds, would have been smooth and via the heavens.
>
> It was, he said, a sight worth seeing to observe how different souls selected their lives. It was strange, pitiful and ridiculous, he said, for the choice made by the souls was in most cases based upon the habits of their former lives. He saw the soul which had once been Orpheus

> choosing the life of a swan out of enmity to the race of women, unwilling to be born of a woman because he had met death at their hands. He also saw the soul of Thamyras choosing the life of a nightingale; on the other hand, he saw birds like the swan and other musical creatures, choosing human lives. The soul which drew the twentieth ticket chose the life of a lion, and this was the soul of Ajax the son of Telamon, who was unwilling to be a man because he remembered the injustice done to him in the judgment concerning the arms of Achillēs. The next was Agamemnon, who took the life of an eagle because he likewise hated the human race by reason of his sufferings.
>
> Drawing one of the middle tickets, the soul of Atlanta caught sight of the great honours attached to an athlete's life and, unable to resist the temptation, snatched at it. And after her followed the soul of Epeus, the son of Panopeus, passing into the nature of a woman well-skilled in arts and crafts. And far off, among the last who chose, he saw the soul of the jester Thersites clothing himself in the form of a monkey. And it turned out that the soul who happened to draw the last ticket of all was that of Odysseus, who now came to make his choice. And his remembrance of his former toils having disenchanted him of ambition, he went around for a long time seeking the life of an ordinary man who minded his own business. He had some difficulty finding this, which was lying about, neglected by everybody else. But when he saw it, he said that he would have made the same choice had his ticket been the first instead of the last, and that he was delighted to have it.
>
> And not only did men pass into animals, but I must also mention that there were animals tame and wild who changed into one another, and into corresponding human natures – the good into the gentle, and the evil into the savage; and there were all kinds of combination.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:619b–620d; cf. CDP pp.842–44, DP2 pp.497–98*

The souls, then, seem to make a choice, but it is deeply influenced by the deeds, experiences and desires of their former lives. It is then time for the souls to take birth. But first, the choice has to be ratified by the two other Fates, the present and the future, and then the souls must be made to forget their past:

> And when all the souls had chosen their lives, they were marshalled and went before *Lachesis.* And she sent with each, to be the guardians of their lives and the fulfillers of their choices, the guardian spirit whom each had chosen. And this spirit led the souls first to *Clotho,* who drew them within the revolution of the spindle turned by her

> hand, thus ratifying the destiny of each. Then, having been linked to her, the guardian spirit led them to *Atropos,* who spun the threads and made the web of destiny irreversible. And from there, without a backward glance, they passed beneath the throne of Necessity.
>
> And when they had all passed, they marched on in a scorching heat to the Plain of Forgetfulness, which was a barren waste, bare of all trees and plants; and then towards evening they encamped by the River of Forgetfulness, whose waters no vessel can contain. And of this they were all obliged to drink a certain measure, and those who were not saved by wisdom drank more than this measure, and each one as he drank, forgot all things.
>
> Now after they had fallen asleep, about the middle of the night, there was a thunderstorm and an earthquake, and in an instant they were driven upwards, one this way and one that, to their birth, like shooting stars. Er himself was prevented from drinking the water, and in what way he returned to the body he did not know; but suddenly, recovering his sight, he found himself lying at dawn on the funeral pyre.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:620d–621b; cf. CDP p.844, DP2 pp.498–99*

Socratēs – or, in reality, Plato – now concludes the story and the extensive dialogue with the observation:

> If we keep our soul unspotted by the world, always holding fast to the heavenly way, pursuing justice and virtue, considering that the soul is immortal, and able to endure every kind of good and evil, then we shall live dear to ourselves and to the gods, both during our time here, and when we receive our reward.... And thus, both here, and in the journey of a thousand years of which I told you, we shall fare well.
>
> *Plato, Republic 10:621c–d; cf. CDP p.844, DP2 p.499*

Plato provides another extensive portrayal of reincarnation in an allegory concerning the nature of the soul in his dialogue, *Phaedrus.* Here, he once again refers to a circumscribed span of time in which the soul reincarnates. Related by Socratēs, the allegory compares the soul to a combination of a "winged charioteer and his pair of winged steeds". The immortal "gods", he explains, drive horses of "noble stock". Mortal human beings, on the other hand, drive a pair of horses of which one is "noble and of noble stock, while the other is the opposite in every way":

> Let us liken the soul to the combination of a winged charioteer and his pair of winged steeds. Now the horses and charioteers of the gods are all noble, and come of noble stock, but ours are mixed. And the

> charioteer of the human soul drives a pair of horses: one of these horses is noble and of noble stock, while the other is the opposite in every way. Therefore, the task of the charioteer is necessarily difficult and troublesome.
>
> Now I must try and explain to you how it is that living beings are both mortal and immortal. The soul has all that is inanimate within her scope, and can travel throughout the entire universe, appearing now in one form, now in another. When perfect and fully winged, she soars upward, and has the whole universe within her grasp; but the soul which loses her feathers, fails in her flight and sinks down, coming finally to rest on solid ground, taking to herself an earthly body which appears to be self-acting, but is really moved by the power of the soul. This combination of soul and body is called a living being, and is termed mortal.
>
> *Plato, Phaedrus 246a–c*

Socratēs now extends the allegory. All the winged charioteers with their horses, good or bad, are led by the mighty *Zeus* on a circuit of the heavens. The gods and immortal souls, he says, are able to move out beyond the confines of the heavenly circuit, where they behold a vision of the "truly existing Being", and see the source of true knowledge of the "real, eternal Absolute":

> Now of this realm beyond the heavens, no earthly poet has sung or ever will sing in such strains as it deserves. But I will tell of it, for I must dare to speak the truth, especially since my discourse is on truth. For it is there that the colourless, formless, intangible, truly existent Being *(Ousia)* dwells – visible only to the spirit *(nous),* the pilot of the soul *(psychē);* It is the Source of all true knowledge.... Not such knowledge as has a beginning, and varies relative to one or other of the things we call realities, but that which dwells in the real, eternal Absolute.... Such is the life of the gods.
>
> *Plato, Phaedrus 247c–e*

Socratēs then goes on to describe the experience of lesser beings, notably man, on this circuit of the heavens. As the allegory progresses, it becomes clear that the circuit represents human life. Those that rise above the circuit – the immortal "gods" – do not have to make the circuit again. Those who strive to gain some "vision of Reality" are given another chance as a human being on the next "circuit" of life. But those who struggle beneath the surface of the heavens with their unruly and unmatched horses, though given further chances as human beings, eventually take birth in lower forms:

Of the other souls, she who is most like to God, and follows Him best, lifts the head of her charioteer above the surface of the heavens as she makes her circuit. But being troubled by the unruly behaviour of her horses, her vision of Reality is impaired. Sometimes rising and sometimes falling, due to the restiveness of her steeds, she sees a part, but not the whole.

The rest, following after, all striving to reach the upper world, fail to do so, and are carried round beneath the surface, trampling and jostling one another, each eager to outstrip the other. And great is the turmoil and conflict and sweat. And because of the incompetence (*lit.* evil) of their charioteers, many are lamed, and many wing feathers are broken. And all, despite their heavy labour, depart without initiation into the mysteries of Reality, feeding henceforth upon the food of mere opinion.

Now the reason why they are so eager to behold the plain of Truth is because the pasturage which is most fitting for the highest part of the soul comes from the meadows there, and the wings by which the soul is gently borne aloft are nourished by it.

Hear, now, the law of *Adrasteia* (Destiny). The soul which follows after God and obtains some vision of the Truth, shall remain without suffering until her next circuit. And if she can always do this, she will remain forever free from harm.

But when, through inability to follow (God), she fails to see the vision and, overtaken by some misfortune, sinks under the burden of forgetfulness and wickedness and, because of that burden, she sheds the feathers of her wings and falls to earth – then she is dealt with according to the law.

In her first birth, no soul is born in the form of a beast. The soul that has seen the most of Truth enters into a child who is destined to become a seeker of wisdom (*philosophos,* a philosopher), or a lover of the beautiful, or one of a musical, artistic and loving nature; the second, who has seen less, into a law-abiding king or ruler; the third, a statesman or a financier or a businessman; the fourth, a lover of gymnastics or a physician; the fifth, a priest of the oracles or the mysteries; to the sixth, that of a poet or some other imitative artist is appropriate; for the seventh, an artisan or farmer; the eighth, a sophist *(sophistikos)* or a demagogue; the ninth, a tyrant.

Now in all these lives, whoever lives righteously obtains a better lot, and whoever lives unrighteously, a worse. But to the (original, divine) state from which a soul has come, she does not return for some ten thousand years. For it takes that much time for a soul to grow her wings again, except for the soul of one who has sought wisdom

> sincerely or has been a lover of wisdom. Such souls, if for three successive periods of a thousand years, they have three times chosen such a life, then, regaining their wings in the three thousandth year, they obtain release.
>
> But the rest, on completion of their first life, face judgment; and being judged, some go to places of correction beneath the earth, and pay the penalty, while others are rewarded by being borne aloft to certain heavenly realms, where whey live on in a manner worthy of the life they led in human form.
>
> But in the thousandth year, both classes alike come to draw lots, and choose their second life, each choosing according to its desire. It is then that a human soul may pass into the life of a beast, or that a soul that was once in human form, may pass from beast back into human form again. But it is not possible for a soul who has never sought the Truth to come into human form....
>
> Therefore, it is just that only the soul of the seeker of wisdom *(philosophos)* should regain her wings, for she is always, so far as she is able, recollected and in communion with those things which make God divine. It is only by the correct practice of such aids to recollection, which provide an ever present doorway to the perfect mystic vision, that a man can become truly perfect. But because he stands apart from the common objects of human hankering, turning his attention to the Divine, he is reproached by the multitude for being out of his wits. For they do not understand that he is in fact inspired (by God).
>
> *Plato, Phaedrus 248a–249d*

Because the works of Plato have been so well preserved, his contributions to this subject have survived better than others of his era. And because the belief had no taboos associated with it, many others after Plato also wrote of reincarnation. Even the great Cicero (106–43 BCE), Roman consul, orator and prolific writer, indicates that the doctrine of reincarnation and the law of cause and effect as taught by the "ancient seers" is not alien to his own way of thinking:

> The mistakes and the sufferings of human life make me think sometimes that those ancient seers, or interpreters of the secrets of heaven and the counsels of the divine Mind, had some glimpses of the truth when they said that men are born in order to suffer the penalty for some sins committed in a former life.
>
> *Cicero, Treatise on Glory, in RR p.63*

Greek mystical philosophy saw a last flowering in the early Christian period among a group later called the Neo-Platonists. They, too, believed

in reincarnation. Plotinus (*c.*205–270 CE), the most well known of the Neo-Platonists, wrote extensively on the subject, often referring to Plato's belief. There is a law of cause and effect, he says, and souls take birth according to the deeds and character of their past lives:

> The soul's choice of a life, says Plato, takes place according to its previous lives.... Even those who disagree with us agree that a system of law and punishment prevails here (in this world). How, then, is it possible to disapprove of a city (this world) which awards each man his due, where virtue is honoured and vice meets appropriate disgrace? ... The gods themselves looking down from above ... keep all things in order from start to finish, allotting to every human being, as life follows life, a fitting portion according to the deeds of previous lives. He who fails to appreciate this is one of that coarse kind of human being who deals boorishly with things divine.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 4:3.8, 2:9.9; cf. PA4 pp.56–57, PA2 pp.256–59, PEC pp.145, 71*

Referring to the Divine as the "universal Soul", he goes on to say that the depth to which souls descend from God varies according to individual "disposition", and he likens the change of body to the changing roles of "an actor on a stage":

> The depth of descent also differs, sometimes lower, sometimes less so, even if it goes into the same species. Every soul descends into a body made ready for it according to its resemblance to the soul's disposition. It moves towards that which it resembles, one to a human being, others to various kinds of animal.... It is really no more than an actor on a stage, who has been murdered, changing his costume and coming on again as another character. The actor, of course, is not really killed. So if dying is no more than the changing of a body – as an actor changes his costume – or if exit from the body is like an actor's exit from the stage when his part is over, what is so very dreadful in this transformation of living beings, the one into another?
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 4:3.12, 3:2.15; cf. PA4 pp.76–77, PA3 pp.90–91, PEC pp.149, 90*

Rebirth, Plotinus reiterates in greater detail, is according to an individual's character:

> Those who have exercised their human faculties, become men once more. Those who have lived entirely through their senses become animals, differences in their natures conforming to the differences between the various species of animal. If their sensuality has been accompanied by outbursts of anger, they become ferocious animals.

> Those who have sought only to gratify their lust and appetite become lustful and gluttonous animals. Those who have not even lived through their senses and desires, but have dwelt in torpidity and grossness, even become plants, for this dullness is the essence of vegetative life, and such people (even while human beings) have been busy transforming themselves into trees! Those, we read, who though otherwise respectable, were lovers of song, become songbirds; kings who ruled stupidly, but with no other vice, become eagles; airy visionaries, forever soaring skywards in philosophic speculation, become high-flying birds; and he who observes social virtues becomes a man again or, if the tendency is less marked, a social creature such as a bee or something of that sort.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 3:4:2; cf. PA3 pp.144–47, PEC p.98*

Plotinus is probably writing tongue-in-cheek when he repeats the list of births allotted to song lovers, stupid kings, airy intellectuals and so on. Greek, Christian, Jewish and Indian writings on reincarnation do contain such inventories of the births allotted to souls who have exhibited particular characteristics. The idea seems to be to impress upon the popular mind the fruits of wrongdoing by means of simple examples, and it is unlikely that they were intended literally.

Escape from reincarnation, says Plotinus, is also possible, for a few souls are able to rise above the realms of birth and death:

> Souls pass from body to body, taking on various forms; and, when it can, a soul will rise beyond the realm of birth, and dwell with the universal Soul.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 3:2.4; cf. PA3 pp.54–55, PEC p.84*

Other Neo-Platonists expressed similar beliefs. Porphyry (c.232–305 CE), a close disciple and biographer of Plotinus, says that souls who have passed through hell, or others not destined to go there, are reborn according to their "merits and demerits":

> The souls that are not destined for the tortures of hell, and those that have passed through this expiation, are born again, in accordance with their merits and demerits.
>
> *Porphyry, On Abstinence from Animal Food, in RR p.81*

And he refers to Empedoclēs' teaching on the subject:

> The divinity (deity, ruler) of *metacosmēsis* (the process of transmigration as opposed to the doctrine) is called *Heimarmenē* and *Physis*

by Empedoclēs, "wrapping the souls with a strange garment of flesh", and clothing them in new garb.

Porphyry, in Stobaeus, Anthology 1:49.60, SDMG pp.54–55

Iamblichus (*c.*250–330), a pupil of Porphyry, writes that the seeming injustices of fate are realized as just when the deeds of former lives are taken into account:

> What appears to us to be an accurate definition of justice does not also appear to be so to the gods (*i.e.* from higher realms). For we, looking at that which is most brief, direct our attention to things present, and to this momentary life, and the manner in which it subsists. But the powers that are superior to us know the whole life of the soul, and all its former lives; and in consequence of this, if they inflict a certain punishment …, they do not inflict it without justice, but looking at the offences committed by souls in former lives: which men, being unaware, think that they unjustly fall into the calamities which they suffer.
>
> *Iamblichus, On the Mysteries 4:4; cf. IME pp.209–10*

More or less contemporary with the Neo-Platonists, the Hermetic philosophers and mystics also taught transmigration of individual souls, as parts of the divine Source, the "One Soul". The major source of Hermetic teachings is the collection of writings known as the *Corpus Hermeticum:*

> Did you not … hear that from One Soul – the All-Soul – come all these souls which are made to circle through the cosmos as though separated (from their Source)? To these souls, then, befall many changes, some to a happier lot and some to just the contrary of that.
>
> Thus, some that were once creeping things change into things that dwell in the water; the souls of water things change to earth dwellers; those that live on the earth change into things with wings; and souls that live in air change into men; while human souls, reaching the first step towards immortality, change into daemons (gods).… But if a soul on entering into the body of a man persists in its vice, it neither tastes immortality, nor shares in the Good; but speeding back again, it follows the path that leads to creeping things. This is the sentence of the vicious soul.
>
> The soul's vice is ignorance. For the soul that has no knowledge of the Things-that-are, or knowledge of their nature, or of the Good, is blinded by the body's passions and tossed about. This wretched soul, not knowing what she is, becomes the slave of bodies of strange form in sorry plight, bearing the body as a load; not as the ruler, but the ruled. This (ignorance) is the soul's vice.

> But, on the other hand, the virtue of the soul is *gnosis* (mystic knowledge). For he who (truly) knows is good and pious, and while still on the earth is divine.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum X:7–9; cf. TGH2 pp.145–46*

The *Corpus Hermeticum* also asserts that although some may find it beyond belief and others may laugh at the idea, transmigration is the lot of the impious:

> (To those), however, who have lived impiously – (to them) is a return to heaven denied, and there is appointed them migration into other bodies unworthy of a holy soul, and base; so that, as this discourse of ours will show, souls in their life on earth run the risk of losing hope of future immortality.
>
> But all of this seems to some to be beyond belief; a tale to others; and to others, maybe, a subject for their mirth. For in this bodily life, the pleasure derived from possessions is a pleasant thing. It is because of this that Strife, in envy of its own hope of immortality, claps the soul in prison, as they say, and holds it down, so that it remains in that part of itself which is mortal, nor desires to know that part which is divine.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum, Perfect Sermon XII:1–2; cf. TGH2 pp.329–30*

Strife or Discord here refers to the power that keeps the soul in this world. Of this power, Hieroclēs, a fifth-century (CE) Pythagorean, also speaks. Quoting from sayings attributed to Empedoclēs and Plato (in *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*), he describes the descent of the soul "from the mansions of the blessed", its fall "headlong into an earthly body", and its subsequent return "to the place from which she descended":

> Man falls and precipitates himself from the mansions of the blessed, as Empedoclēs the Pythagorean says:
>
> "Banished the blissful bowers,
> forlorn he wanders, by dire Discord tossed,
> and in impetuous storms of raging Strife is lost."
>
> But he reascends and recovers his original dwelling place if he scorns the things here below and detests this dismal abode where, as the same poet says, there dwell, "murder and rage and thousand swarms of woes", in which they who fall,
>
> "wander bewildered, helpless of relief,
> in the dark plains of injury and grief".

> He who shuns these dismal plains of injury is led by an excellent longing into the meadow of Truth. If he forsakes it, his wings flag and fail him, and down he drops headlong into an earthly body,
>
> > "where in large draughts
> > he quaffs the oblivion of his happiness".
>
> And herein agrees the opinion of Plato who, speaking of this fall of the soul, says:
>
> "But when, having no longer a strength sufficient to follow good, she beholds not this field of Truth and, being by some misfortune filled with vice and forgetfulness, she grows dull and heavy and, being thus stupefied, she comes to lose her wings and to fall down upon the earth – then the law sends her to animate a mortal body."[3]
>
> And concerning the return of the soul to the place from which she descended, the same Plato says:
>
> "The man who, by the *Logos,* has overcome the tumult and wild disorder that are occasioned in him by the mixture of earth, water, air and fire, retakes this primal form, and recovers his original dwelling place because he returns sound and whole to the star that had been assigned to him."[4]
>
> He returns "sound" because he is freed from the passions which are as so many diseases; and this cure cannot be performed in him except by means of the practical virtues. He returns "whole" because he recovers understanding and knowledge as essential and proper parts of himself, which cannot happen to him but by means of the contemplative virtues.
>
> *Hieroclēs, Golden Verses of Pythagoras 55–60; cf. HVP pp.105–6*

It is, then, "by the *Logos*" and "by means of the contemplative virtues" – by spiritual practice or meditation – that the soul can recover "her wings", can escape the earthly body, and can become "whole", returning to her original home.

See also: **gilgul, karma, reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity), reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism), tanāsukh**.

1. Jerome, *Letter (CXXX) to Demetrias* 16, *PWJ* p.270.
2. Plato, *Phaedo* 81e–82c.

3. Plato, *Phaedrus* 248c–d.
4. Plato, *Timaeus* 42c.

reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity) Modern Christianity has no doctrine of reincarnation, and those Christians who accept the belief would agree that their views are not in accordance with normal Christian dogma. But this has not always been the case. To understand how this has come about requires a brief appraisal of the early Christian scene.

Two Streams

At the outset, and very broadly speaking, there appear to have been two main groups of Christians. Firstly, there were the original disciples and followers of Jesus. Secondly, there was the school built upon the evangelism and teachings of Paul. These two schools had different doctrines, and it is the teachings of Paul which eventually became the basis of 'orthodox' Christianity.

From his letters in the New Testament, as well as the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is pro-Pauline and almost entirely concerned with Paul, it can be seen that Paul was a person of great energy and enthusiasm, travelling widely to promote this teachings during the 50s and 60s, twenty years or so after the death of Jesus. Paul, however, had never met Jesus; in his extensive letters, he never refers to the sayings and parables of Jesus; on his own admission, he had never conferred with the other disciples of Jesus to see if he was giving the same teaching as them, or whether he could work with them as a team; and he never received the consent of Jesus' appointed apostles to teach.

From a letter to the Galatians, a region in central Asia Minor (the Asian part of Turkey), it is evident that Paul's recent converts have clearly been disturbed by Christian teachers who taught differently from him. Paul therefore finds it necessary to try and justify his position:

> I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel – which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed....
>
> But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ....

> When it pleased God, who ... called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.[1]
>
> *Galatians 1:6–9, 11–12, 15–19, KJV*

Paul was a high-profile, opinionated personality who courted controversy. On reaching any town, his first step was to go to the local synagogue or meeting place, and start proclaiming his teachings of the risen Christ and the imminent end of the world. Yet it is evident from letters such as *Galatians* and others that Christian groups with a different teaching coexisted alongside his groups of converts, some – perhaps many – of them predating Paul's arrival on the scene. These other groups kept a much lower profile, and very little is known of their beliefs. But among them would almost certainly have been some of the original followers of Jesus from whom Paul had deliberately distanced himself.

These original followers are likely to have been more than a few. The gospels record crowds of several thousand coming to hear Jesus speak. Mark speaks of a "great multitude from Galilee ... and from Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea (south of Judaea), and from beyond Jordan", and likewise from "Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude".[2] In *Acts,* Luke mentions disciples in the Palestinian cities of Joppa (Jaffa), Caesarea and Lydda (Lod), in the Syrian cities of Damascus and Antioch, at Ephesus further north in Asia Minor, and in many other places.[3] All these disciples would have been there before Paul began his missionary activities; and it is these original followers of Jesus, and those gathered around them, who would have comprised the original Christian groups.

The early history of Christianity, however, is told largely by the followers of Pauline or 'orthodox' Christianity, an account in which the original groups of Jesus' followers are largely ignored. What is evident, however, is that from the first century onward there were other Christians whom the 'orthodox' labelled 'gnostics' and 'heretics', and that a number of the gnostic teachers who led these groups claimed descent from the original apostles. It is probable, then, that the stream of Christianity which descended from the original disciples of Jesus and their followers consisted of those gnostics and heretics so castigated by the orthodox.

The word 'gnostic' is derived from the Greek, *gnosis,* meaning 'knowledge', referring to inner, personal mystic knowledge or revelation. The gnostics were thus of a mystical orientation, and the gnostic stream of Christianity remained in existence for at least the first four or five centuries. And

there is no doubt that they believed in reincarnation. In fact, even some early members of the Pauline side of Christianity did as well. Notable among these was Origen (*c.*185–254), one of the earliest Christian teachers and theologians.

If, therefore, Jesus did teach reincarnation, why is it not more evident in the gospels and the New Testament? The answer requires a brief diversion into the nature of the differences between Pauline and gnostic Christianity, and a consideration of who moulded the contents of the New Testament.[4]

To begin with, it must be pointed out that the gospels are a very poor record of Jesus' teachings. They are not and never were designed as a definitive statement of Jesus' teachings. They were not compiled by his direct disciples, but by others, several decades after his death, who had their own ideas about things. And they then underwent three or four hundred years of hand-copying, editing and 'correction' before the first copies were made which actually survived to present times. During that early period, anything could – and probably did – happen to the contents of the gospels. Earlier Pauline Christians were noted for their fondness for burning, destroying or 'correcting' all literature which did not accord with their beliefs. And since they did not believe in reincarnation, it is hardly surprising to find that direct references to it are almost entirely absent from the gospels. Thus, while most of the sayings attributed to Jesus in Matthew, Luke and Mark are not specifically Pauline, the compilers of these three gospels were to a large extent promoting the eschatological and Pauline view of Jesus' teachings. In fact, in the New Testament, only John's gospel, the three letters of John, and possibly *Hebrews* and *Revelations* are not overtly Pauline in their message. Even John's gospel is generally believed to have been edited and added to by those who were sympathetic to Paul's teachings.

But why were the orthodox so hostile towards reincarnation, and other gnostic teachings? Primarily, it was a matter of conflicting doctrines. From the outset, Pauline Christianity had been evangelical and outward-looking. Gnostic Christianity, on the other hand, was by nature inward-looking. The mystically minded are characteristically more concerned with their own spiritual growth than with converting others. Although they would have come together in groups for mutual support, and may well have produced literature concerning their beliefs, it is most unlikely that they would have been interested in forming a religion. Unconcerned about ecclesiastical or political power and motivated more by a sincere desire for truth, they were little interested in forming strong organizations, dictating dogma or increasing their numbers. Their ambitions were personal and spiritual rather than material and evangelical. As a result, these schools of thought faded with time, for their strength was inner, departing with the individuals concerned. Pauline or evangelical Christianity was therefore left without competition, and it was they who organized themselves – with many internal

disagreements and schisms – into the religion which later became orthodox Christianity.

In accordance with the beliefs of his own upbringing as a Pharisee, Paul taught the end of the world, the Day of Judgment, and the resurrection of the dead. To this, he added the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus leading to the forgiveness of sins, the physical resurrection of Jesus, the Second Coming, and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Now these doctrines are completely incompatible with the primary tenets of gnosticism – a belief in the pre-existence and immortality of the soul, personal responsibility for one's actions, reincarnation of the soul, and release of the soul through the power of a Saviour who is an incarnation of the *Logos*.

To Paul and orthodox Christianity, the physical body would be physically resurrected in a spiritualized state,[5] and the sins of the believers would be forgiven, paid for by the suffering of Jesus on the cross.[6] To the gnostic, the body was a prison, the fruit of actions and desires in previous lives, a veil between the soul and God.

Yet these two streams both claimed to be following the teachings of Jesus. Moreover, gnostic teachings were not new, as Hippolytus, the early-third-century Bishop of Rome, and other Christian heresy-hunters were happy to point out.[7] Gnosticism has much in common with Pythagoreanism and Greek mystic philosophy. Pauline Christianity, on the other hand, claimed to be a fulfilment of the Jewish belief in the coming of the Messiah. It was the New Covenant with God, the new arrangement with the Divine, supported by prophecies found in the Old Covenant, and replacing the law of Moses.

So while gnosticism sought its verification in personal, mystic experience, Pauline Christianity required blind faith in an unverifiable doctrine, attempting to suppress the doubt – which is the natural companion of blind faith – by proselytization and the forceful preaching of dogma. It is an age-old principle: when the argument is weak, shout louder! In place of healthy introspection and constructive examination of one's own beliefs, go out and convert others.

Gnosticism therefore represented a challenge to Pauline beliefs that could not be tolerated. And to add insult to injury, the gnostics themselves sometimes interpreted Paul as a gnostic, intimating that he had believed in reincarnation; for Paul undoubtedly had mystical tendencies wrapped up in his complex psyche. History is rarely clear-cut, especially the history of human belief.

It is for reasons of this nature, therefore, that the 'orthodox' sought to suppress and eliminate gnostic teachings. And that included reincarnation. If, therefore, Jesus had taught reincarnation, to find direct evidence of it in the New Testament would be very unlikely. On the other hand, one might hope to find instances where the teachings of Jesus are compatible with

reincarnation, using language and metaphors which are commonly found in gnostic texts to describe reincarnation and the teachings that go along with it. And this is indeed the case.

A Storm of Heresy

That the gnostics interpreted Jesus' gospel sayings and parables in this manner is demonstrated partially by the few remaining writings of the gnostics themselves, and partially by the somewhat unreliable and highly prejudiced writings of those orthodox Christians who wrote voluminously against all those they regarded as heretics. The Christian monk and scholar, Jerome (*c.*347–420), famous for the first translation of the Bible into Latin, graphically illustrates this in a letter to Demetrias, a young and highborn Roman lady who had decided to live the life of a virgin. Jerome feels the need to tell her of a "a storm of heresy (which) came from the East ... while you were still quite small", going on to warn her:

> Now I have reason to fear – in fact a report has reached me to this effect – that the poisonous germs of this heresy still live and sprout in the minds of some to this day....
>
> Men of this type whisper in corners, and pretend to inquire into the justice of God. "Why," they ask, "was a particular soul born in a particular province? What is the reason that some are born of Christian parents, others among wild beasts and savage tribes who have no knowledge of God?" Wherever they can strike the simple with their scorpion sting, and form an ulcer fitted to their purpose, there they diffuse their venom. "Is it for nothing, think you" – thus they argue – "that a little child, scarcely able to recognize its mother by a laugh or a look of joy, which has done neither good nor evil, is seized by a devil or overwhelmed with jaundice or doomed to bear afflictions which godless men escape, while God's servants have to bear them?"
>
> "Now if God's judgments," they say, "are 'true and righteous altogether',[8] and if 'there is no unrighteousness in Him',[9] we are compelled by reason to believe that our souls have pre-existed in heaven, that they are condemned to ... be buried in human bodies because of some ancient sins, and that we are punished in this valley of weeping for old misdeeds."
>
> This, according to them, is the prophet's reason for saying, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray,"[10] and again, "Bring my soul out of prison."[11] They explain in the same way the question of the disciples in the gospel, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?",[12] and other similar passages.
>
> This godless and wicked teaching was formerly rife in Egypt and the East; and now it lurks secretly like a viper in its hole among many

persons in those parts, defiling the purity of the faith, and gradually creeping on like an inherited disease till it assails a large number.

Jerome, Letter (CXXX) to Demetrias 16, PWJ pp.269–70

Biblical References

Jerome's letter makes it clear that a belief in reincarnation was still prevalent in Christianity among "many persons" even as late as the fifth century. And this belief was also attributed by such "persons" to both biblical writers as well as Jesus himself. As Jerome indicates, John's story of Jesus and the man born blind was commonly understood by the gnostics of those times as a reference to reincarnation. The passage reads:

And as Jesus passed by,
he saw a man which was blind from his birth.
And his disciples asked him, saying,
"Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents,
that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered,
"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:
but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

John 9:1–3, KJV

Taking the story at face value, the disciples clearly presume that the suffering of the blind man and his parents is due to sin. And since the man was born blind, it seems that they are thinking of some past existence, for how else could an unborn or newborn baby have committed any sin?

The reply, however, is incongruous, for Jesus says that neither the parents nor the man himself have sinned, but that the situation has been divinely arranged so that he can perform the miracle of restoring sight to the blind man. That God would have created such suffering simply so that Jesus could perform a miracle seems untenable. With so many sick people already in need of help, surely there would have been no need for a baby to be born blind simply for the sake of a miracle later in his life?

Now there are many other similar miracle stories in the synoptic gospels which are clearly associated with the forgiveness of sins, thus pointing directly to the relationship between sin and physical infirmity. And they end happily with Jesus curing the sick person of his or her particular condition, telling them that their sins have been forgiven. "Go and sin no more,"[13] he says on several occasions, and in one instance he even adds, "lest a worse thing come unto you"[14] – the "worse thing" being interpretable as rebirth in this world due to 'more sin'. But in this example from John, Jesus says that neither the man nor his parents have sinned.

Perhaps, then, the dialogue was originally one of John's metaphorical passages with a double meaning, implying both the physical and the spiritual blindness into which all souls are born – both being the result of sin. A later editor then changed Jesus' reply, thus creating the confusion. Maybe the added response was an attempt to deal with the observation, "What about people whom Jesus forgave of their sins, curing them of infirmities they had had since birth?" For if it were agreed that sickness was the result of sin, then naturally those who are born with infirmities must have committed sins before their birth – in a previous life. So all in all, the question raised by the disciples is a good one, indicating a belief in the sins of past lives. But the reply as it now stands is definitely odd.

Reincarnation is invariably understood to entail a just return for the actions and desires of past lives, and there are other instances in the gospels where Jesus acknowledges this aspect of the law of cause and effect. According to Luke, for example, in an informal conversation between Jesus and his disciples, Jesus observes that some Galilean zealots (freedom fighters) who had recently been executed by Pilate, as well as eighteen people who had met an accidental death when a tower at Siloam had collapsed,[15] had all been reaping the fruit of their past sins. Here, Jesus clearly demonstrates that he acknowledges the existence of a link between present events and past sins.

The story in John's gospel is only one of a number of New Testament passages interpreted by the gnostics to mean reincarnation. As Jerome points out, there were "other similar passages". The second-century Irenaeus (*c.* 120–202), Bishop of Lyons and ardent heresy-hunter, mentions the Carpocratians, for instance, who – according to a document he has before him – explain Jesus' saying which begins, "Agree with thine adversary quickly ..." to mean reincarnation. The gospel passage reads:

> Agree with thine adversary quickly,
> whiles thou art in the way with him;
> Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,
> and the judge deliver thee to the officer,
> and thou be cast into prison.
> Verily I say unto thee,
> thou shalt by no means come out thence,
> till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.
>
> *Matthew 5:25–26, KJV*

Here, the Carpocratians explained, the "adversary" is the devil; the "judge" is the chief of the world-building powers *(archons),* that is, an agent of the negative power concerned with the administration of the physical universe; the "officer" is the power who oversees the formation of a new body; and

the "prison" is the body itself. The devil or Satan is thus perceived as the ruler of the lesser *archons*. Irenaeus then continues:

> Again, they interpret these expressions, "Thou shalt not go out thence until thou pay the very last farthing," as meaning that no one can escape the power of those angels who made the world, but that he must pass from body to body, until he has experience of every kind of action which can be practised in this world; and when he entertains no further desires, then his liberated soul should soar upwards to God, who is above the angels, the makers of the world.
>
> *Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1:25.4; cf. AH1 pp.95–96*

To have "experience of every kind of action which can be practised in this world" presumably means that a soul must clear all the effects of its past *karma* or actions before it can attain liberation from reincarnation and the powers which rule this world. Only then can it return to God.

There were many other such interpretations. Eusebius reports that a well-known Alexandrian gnostic, Basilidēs, published twenty-four volumes of *Interpretations of the Gospels.* Active around 125–135 CE, his later followers claimed that he had received his doctrine through a line of succession from the original disciples of Jesus. His influence must have been considerable, because followers still existed in fourth-century Egypt. Basilidēs also wrote his own poetry or songs, and compiled his own edition of a gospel. All these have been lost, many copies being burnt, no doubt, as heretical, for only reports and brief quotations have come down to present times – seven by Clement of Alexandria (*c.*150–215) and one by Origen. Irenaeus and others also give an account that probably originated with Justin Martyr around 150 CE.

From the little that remains, it seems that Basilidēs' teachings were centred on the conventional gnostic or mystic path, which inevitably included reincarnation. Clement of Alexandria reports:

> The hypothesis of Basilidēs says that the soul, having sinned before in another life, endures punishment in this.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies IV:12, WCA2 p.176*

Clement also noted that the mid-third-century gnostic, Theodotus, had recorded Basilidēs' teaching of reincarnation. In this extract, Theodotus is speaking of an interpretation given by the followers of Basilidēs to a passage found in both *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy:*

> The followers of Basilidēs refer "God visiting the disobedient unto the third and fourth generation" to reincarnation.
>
> *Theodotus, Excerpta ex Theodoto 28, ETCA p.63; cf. Deuteronomy 5:9, Exodus 20:5*

The interpretation is enlightening, since the idea that punishment for sins would be exacted by God from future generations seems bizarre. Here, it is suggested that the passage is a misunderstanding of reincarnation, the "third and fourth generation" referring to future births.

In Origen's sole quotation, he comments that Basilidēs was one of those who – probably unjustifiably – credited the apostle Paul with a belief in transmigration into forms lower than that of man. This assertion was based upon an interpretation of a passage from *Romans:*

> The apostle (Paul) has said, "I was once alive apart from the law,"[16] at some time or other. That is (Paul means), before I came into this body, I lived in the kind of body that is not subject to the law: the body of a domestic animal or bird.
>
> *Basilidēs, in Origen's Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, GS p.439*

Early Gnostics

Although gnosticism by no means began in Christian times, the earliest gnostic named by the early Christian fathers is Simon Magus, a contemporary of Jesus mentioned in *Acts,* and said in the *Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions* to have been a successor of John the Baptist. A Samaritan by birth, Simon Magus taught of the *Logos,* its emanations as creation, the descent of the soul into the realm of birth and death, and its salvation through a suitably qualified Saviour. This is the age-old mystic doctrine and, in his summary of Simon's teachings, Irenaeus writes of the captive soul and its salvation. He also indicates that Simon understood the "lost sheep" of Jesus' parable[17] to be the soul lost in the cycle of rebirth. The pure and virginal soul becomes like a "common prostitute", taking a multiplicity of material desires as her 'lovers':[18]

> And Thought (the *Ennoia* or *Logos*) was made prisoner by the powers and angels (rulers) that had been emanated by her. And she suffered every kind of indignity at their hands to prevent her reascending to her Father, even to being imprisoned in the human body and transmigrating into other … bodies, as from one vessel into another.… So she, transmigrating from body to body, and thereby also continually undergoing indignity, at last became a common prostitute; and she was the 'lost sheep'.
>
> "Wherefore also," (says the Saviour), "am I come to take her away for the first time and free her from her bonds; to make sure salvation to men by my *gnosis.*"
>
> *Irenaeus, Against Heresies I:23.2–3; cf. AH1 pp.87–88, FFF p.169*

Simon Magus was systematically vilified by the early 'orthodoxy', and it is no surprise that none of his works have survived, even as fragments quoted by others. But his association with John the Baptist is of considerable interest. Practically nothing is known of what John actually taught, but since a disciple will normally teach the same path as his Master, did John, too, like his disciple Simon, also teach reincarnation?

Among the many other gnostic Christians who taught or believed in reincarnation was the well-known Valentinus (*fl.*140–160 CE) from whom a number of later gnostic schools were descended, some still extant in the seventh century. He and his contemporary Marcion (*fl.*140–160 CE) were both respected members of the Church at Rome for many years, Valentinus even being considered to fill the post of bishop. The fourth-century Epiphanius indicated that Valentinus taught reincarnation, together with the little-known Colarbasus and "many misguided sects", though whether Epiphanius' comment includes Marcion as well is ambiguous:

> (Marcion) believes that the same soul is in men and animals. This futile conjecture is made by many misguided sects. Valentinus and Colarbasus, and all gnostics and Manichaeans, claim that there is a reincarnation of souls, and that there are transmigrations of the soul of (spiritually) ignorant persons – as they themselves call them.... They say that the soul returns and is re-embodied in each of the animals until it recognizes (the Truth), and is thus cleansed and set free, and departs to the heavens.
>
> *Epiphanius, Panarion 3.24c–d, PES p.298*

The fact that Valentinus and Marcion were once well-regarded by the 'orthodox' demonstrates that although it is convenient to talk of the two streams of early Christianity – gnostic and Pauline – the dividing lines were not always so clear. It also demonstrates that 'orthodox' Christians were not completely certain of their doctrine, especially in the first two or three centuries. It was not until later that doctrine was established at Church councils, sometimes under the direction of the current Roman emperor, although a number of these councils resulted not in agreement, but in schism.

Epiphanius and others may have derided the gnostic teachers, but other early Christians, though they disagreed with them on many points, afforded them considerable respect. Clement of Alexandria, for example, highlights Basilidēs, Valentinus and Marcion as outstanding personalities of the previous generation.[19] As regards reincarnation, he also records that Theodotus, a later follower of Valentinus, when speaking of the liberating power of mystic baptism, observes:

> But it is not only the (spiritual) washing (of baptism) that is liberating, but the knowledge of who we were, and what we have become; where we were, into what we have been thrown; whither we hasten, from what we are redeemed; what birth is, and what rebirth.
>
> *Theodotus, Excerpta ex Theodoto 78; cf. ETCA p.89, GRJ p.45*

Theodotus also observes, "Until baptism ... fate is real; but, after it, the astrologers are no longer right."[20] He is implying that the one who gives the baptism takes spiritual responsibility for the soul, also becoming responsible for the administration of the soul's earthly destiny, rather than the forces normally governing fate.

Had more gnostic literature survived, especially the gospel commentaries, there is little doubt that there would now be a wealth of extant material explaining the principles of reincarnation from the gospels. As Jerome pointed out, there were "many similar passages" to those he had already indicated. It is not difficult to surmise which passages would have received this interpretation. Prime candidates would almost certainly have included those sayings and parables where Jesus uses terms such as blindness,[21] darkness,[22] drunkenness,[23] the grave,[24] and sin, destiny and freedom from sin,[25] which were employed not only by others of his era, but have been used by mystics of many other traditions throughout the ages in connection with the doctrine of reincarnation.

Other New Testament Indications

Among the passages quoted by modern writers seeking indications of reincarnation in the gospels are also those which concern the association of the prophet Elias (Elijah) with Jesus and John the Baptist. The trail starts in Mark's gospel where the gospel compiler relates that some of the people thought that Jesus was either the resurrected form of John the Baptist or a reincarnation of Elias or another of the past Jewish mystics. The belief demonstrates that such notions were not unfamiliar to the people of those times, at least as regards the reincarnation of past prophets:

> And King Herod heard of him (Jesus), for his name was spread abroad, and he said that "John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him."
>
> Others said, that "it is Elias." And others said, that "it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets." But when Herod heard thereof, he said, "It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead."
>
> *Mark 6:14–16; cf. Mark 8:27–29, KJV*

In another passage from Mark, Jesus himself is reported to have said that Elias had already come in the form of John the Baptist. The disciples ask Jesus:

> "Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?"
>
> And he answered and told them, "Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught. But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him."
>
> *Mark 9:11–13, KJV*

Luke and Matthew both take their versions of this dialogue from Mark. Characteristically, Luke paraphrases, while Matthew copies and then elucidates:

> Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.
>
> *Matthew 17:13, KJV*

Elsewhere, Matthew repeats the same in a passage unique to his gospel when he also has Jesus say that the coming of John the Baptist has been foretold by the prophets. Matthew clearly indicates his belief that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of the prophet Elias, this fitting well with his characteristic use of Jewish scripture to 'prove' his message:

> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to accept it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.
>
> *Matthew 11:13–15; cf. KJV, RSV*

The compiler of John's gospel takes a different stance. Familiar with the synoptic gospels as well as the other stories that were going around, he seems to want to put the record straight for he has John the Baptist flatly deny that he is a reincarnation of Elias:

> And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?" And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, "I am not the Christ."
>
> And they asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias?" And he saith, "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" And he answered, "No."
>
> *John 1:19–21, KJV*

The general meaning, then, that can be drawn from these various passages is that the concept of reincarnation of the prophets was not unfamiliar to the Jewish people of those times. Indeed, Elias and many of their mystics were expected to come again, especially at the end of the world. The same was later believed of Jesus, and there are similar beliefs in Islam.

Further, when Mark has Jesus say, "Elias is indeed come," referring to John the Baptist, Jesus is perhaps indicating that all prophets are of the same nature. They are of the same divine Essence, having the same message to give. There is a difference, however, between the way mystics and ordinary souls come to this world. As Jesus says in John, mystics come because they are sent by the Father. They are free to come and go as they please, and are not the servants of sin. They come by the will of God, not through the compulsion and constraints of their own past sins. Other souls are enslaved by sin, coming to the realm of death only because of their sins.[26]

Again in the New Testament, this time in *Revelations*, in a long discourse said to have been made to the author by the spiritual form of Jesus, there are a number of assertions which seem to indicate liberation from reincarnation through contact with the Word of God, called the "Tree of Life", the "hidden *manna*", the "Name" and "my Voice". Here, rebirth – if this is what it refers to – is called the "second death", return to this world of death, reminiscent of Jesus' assertion in John's gospel that those who do not follow him will "die in their sins":[27]

> He that hath an ear,
> let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches:
>
> "To him that overcometh
> will I give to eat of the Tree of Life,
> which is in the midst of the paradise of God....
>
> "He that overcometh
> shall not be hurt of the second death....
> "To him that overcometh
> will I give to eat of the hidden *manna,*
> and will give him a white stone,
> and in the stone a new Name written,
> which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it....
>
> "He that overcometh,
> the same shall be clothed in white raiment,
> and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life,
> but I will confess his name before my Father,
> and before His angels....
>
> "Him that overcometh
> will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,
> and he shall go no more out:

And I will write upon him the Name of my God,
  and the Name of the city of my God ...
  and I will write upon him my new Name....

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock:
  if any man hear my Voice and open the door,
  I will come in to him,
  and will sup with him, and he with me.

"To him that overcometh
  will I grant to sit with me in my throne,
  even as I also overcame,
  and am set down with my Father in His throne....

"He that overcometh
  shall inherit all things;
And I will be his God, and he shall be my son."
Book of Revelation 2:7,11,17, 3:5,12,20–21, 21:7, KJV

"He that overcometh" probably refers to he who overcomes the power of the devil, who gains mastery over the many facets of the mind, becoming free from sin, and from the realms of mind and matter. And the result, says Jesus, is that "he shall no more go out," and "shall not be hurt of the second death" – meaning, perhaps, that he will return no more to spiritual death in the physical creation through the gateway of rebirth. "I will come in to him," "I will sup with him," he will "sit with me in my throne," he will become a permanent "pillar in the temple of my God," "he ... shall inherit all things" and will become the "son" of God – all these are allusions to the soul's attainment of union with God, after which there is no returning to this world.

Being "clothed in white raiment" is a reference to the 'robe of glory', the true garment or nature of a pure soul, unencumbered by mind and body, which the soul experiences after rising above the realm of the devil. Being named in the "Book of Life" is another expression commonly found in the ancient literature, in reference to those who are destined or chosen to receive initiation from a true Saviour. Later Christians, of course, took it to mean anyone who was a Christian, according to their concept of Christianity.

Intriguingly, these verses, although appearing at regular intervals throughout chapters two and three, with the last one located in chapter twenty-one, fit so well together that it may be wondered if they once constituted a complete and independent poem, split up and used by the compiler of this strange book.

The Mysteries

There is a further reason why there are only hints concerning reincarnation in the New Testament: because reincarnation was often a part of the secret 'mysteries' taught only to the initiates of various mystical paths in the ancient world. The 'mysteries' were the secret teachings and initiations that were an established part of many esoteric paths, hence the expression, 'mystery religions'. The early Christian writer, Arnobius (*fl.c.*300 CE), confirms:

> (It) is said in the more hidden mysteries, that the souls of the wicked go into cattle and other beasts after they have been removed from human bodies.
>
> *Arnobius, Against the Pagans 2:16, ASP1 p.130*

The question is essentially whether or not Jesus reserved certain things for his disciples alone that he did not give out in public gatherings. There is certainly a tradition that this is so. Irenaeus relates that the Carpocratians, while understanding various gospel passages to refer to reincarnation, also believed that Jesus had taught many things only orally in his 'mysteries':

> And in their writings we read, as follows, the interpretation which they give (of their views), declaring that Jesus spoke in a mystery to his disciples and apostles privately, and that they requested and obtained permission to hand down the things thus taught them to others who should be worthy and believing.
>
> *Irenaeus, Against Heresies I:25.5, AH1 p.96*

Although it cannot now be known with certainty whether reincarnation was a part of Jesus' 'mysteries', the early Christian teacher, Clement of Alexandria, does confirm that there were many things which Jesus did not entrust to all and sundry:

> He (Jesus) did not certainly disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; but to the few to whom he knew that they belonged, who were capable of receiving and being moulded according to them. But secret things are entrusted to speech, not to writing.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies I:1, WCA1 p.356*

Teachings such as these, then, were conveyed by word of mouth, not in writing. For, as he later adds:

> There is great danger in divulging the secret of the true philosophy to those whose delight it is unsparingly to speak against everything, not justly; and who shout forth all kinds of names and words inde-

> corously, deceiving themselves, and beguiling those who adhere to them.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies I:2, WCA1 p.361*

People only want to argue and debate, he says, "deceiving themselves" and others. Likewise, speaking of his own teaching, he says quite clearly that he does not write down everything he thinks:

> It is requisite, therefore, to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken, which the Son of God taught.... Such were the impediments in the way of my writing. And even now I fear, as it is said, "to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot, and turn and rend us".[28] For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light, to swinish and untrained hearers. For scarcely could anything which they could hear be more ludicrous than these to the multitude; nor any subjects on the other hand more admirable or more inspiring to those of noble nature. "But the natural (worldly) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him."[29]
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies I:12, WCA1 p.388*

The worldly man, he says, rejects spiritual teachings instinctively, since they appear to him to be "ludicrous", though the same things are full of inspiration to "those of noble nature". Hence, he quotes Jesus' advice on the subject: "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine." The same idea is conveyed by Clement's pupil, Origen, who comments:

> This word (mystery) is usually applied to the deeper and more mystical doctrines, which are rightly concealed from the multitude.
>
> *Origen, Against Celsus V:19, OCC p.278*

Early Dilemmas

It is not surprising that so many of the early Christians believed in reincarnation. The philosophy was widespread in the Middle East of those times, and it would not have been unusual if Jesus had taught it. Many other mystics of the time did so, where it was an integral and natural extension of the belief in an immortal soul as the essence and real nature of man. A belief in the innate immortality of the soul is common among spiritually minded people, and has been endorsed by many mystics. Naturally, if the soul is immortal and of the same essence as God, a drop of the divine Ocean, and as a consequence does not live and die with the physical body, then it must have come from somewhere before this life, and go on somewhere else afterwards. The question is, where does it come from, where does it go to, and

what determines its passage? Reincarnation and the law of cause and effect, together with an understanding of higher realms and the possibility of the soul's sojourn there, provides a rational answer.

The immortality of the soul was certainly taught not only by the gnostics but also by other early Christians. The belief was entertained by a number of the early fathers, and also in the *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*.[30] Later Christian dogma, however, denied the existence of the soul prior to birth, a doctrinal position adopted since at least the sixth century. Souls are said to be created along with the body. After death, they go to heaven or hell, perhaps via an interim stay in purgatory. There they await the 'last day' when all of them will be reunited with their bodies, and be judged according to the deeds of their one and only chance at human life.

But, from a rational point of view, the idea has many difficulties. What, for example, of those who came before Jesus? Why does God seem to give some individuals a better chance in life than others? Are good people from religions other than Christianity condemned to hell? Does Christianity have a monopoly on goodness and holiness? And what is the place, in the divine scheme of things, of all the other creatures who inhabit this world?

The early Christian fathers who struggled with these and similar problems were divided in opinion, an uncertainty that only emphasizes the fact that the four gospels, as in so many other instances, do not present a complete picture of Jesus' teachings, and are open to interpretation. The great St Augustine (354–430), for instance, Bishop of Hippo (396–430) in North Africa, was one of the most influential of all the early Church fathers. Raised in Catholicism, for nine years he became a Manichaean – well known for their belief in reincarnation and the soul's inherent immortality. But after his return to Christianity, he remained in doubt upon this issue. In his *Confessions,* speaking of his childhood and musing over the problems of a baby being born in sin and guilt, he wrote:

> Say Lord to me, ... did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? Was it that which I spent within my mother's womb? ... And what before that life again, O God my joy, was I anywhere or in any body? For this I have none to tell me, neither father nor mother, nor experience of others, nor mine own memory.
>
> *St Augustine, Confessions I:7.9, CSA p.7*

His honesty is appealing. "For this I have none to tell me ... nor experience of others, nor mine own memory." After relinquishing both Christianity and Manichaeism, Augustine languished in doubt and scepticism. But moving to Rome, he came into contact with the Neo-Platonists, particularly the writings of Plotinus (c.205–270 CE), which brought new life to his spiritual seeking. Of Plato and Plotinus, he writes:

> The message of Plato, the purest and most luminous in all philosophy, has at last scattered the clouds of error, and now shines forth mainly in Plotinus. This Platonist is so like his master that one would think they lived at the same time, or rather – since there is so long a period of time between them – that Plato is reborn again in Plotinus.
>
> *St Augustine, Against the Academics III:18.41; cf. RR p.80, SAA p.148*

Plotinus was a disciple of the mystic Ammonius Saccas who in 193 CE founded the famous Alexandrian school of Neo-Platonism, called the Eclectic Theosophical School or the Philalethians, the 'lovers of truth'. Ammonius left no written record of his teaching, but he generated a revival of interest in the philosophy of Plato that lasted many centuries.

It was through Augustine and other Church fathers familiar with Greek philosophy that Christianity gained a theology, something essential if the religion was to be accepted by the intelligentsia of the day. Among the first to bring Greek philosophy to 'orthodox' Christianity was Clement of Alexandria, the head of a private school opened by his teacher Pantaenus (*d.c.*190 CE) for Christian converts undergoing prebaptismal instruction.

Coming from the heady intellectual and cosmopolitan atmosphere of Alexandria, and thoroughly steeped in Greek mystical philosophy, Clement would have been familiar with the doctrines of reincarnation and the immortality of the soul. Not all his writings have survived, however, and those that have are unlikely to have escaped editorial tampering on sensitive issues. Even so, he seems to have believed in the pre-existence of the soul and its immortality. In his *Exhortation to the Heathen,* he writes:

> Before the foundation of the world were we, who, because destined to be in Him, pre-existed in the eye of God before – we the spiritual creations of the Word of God, on whose account we date from the beginning; for, "In the beginning was the Word."
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen I; cf. WCA1 p.22*

Recognizing in Jesus' teachings the same truths that the ancient Greek mystics had taught, Clement, together with his student Origen, who took over the school after Clement, along with others like them, helped create a means by which the educated could approach Christianity. But they also demonstrated the truth that people take the teachings of the mystics, and fit them into their own background and way of thinking. This is how religious doctrine slowly forms around a mystic's teachings, the result being something similar, yet subtly different, slowly moving further and further away from its source.

Embracing Greek philosophy in the formative years, later Christian theologians tried to distance themselves from their origins, and Origen especially

was later to become a focus of controversy and a target of abuse. Origen was among those who had attended the discourses of Ammonius Saccas,[31] and not only did Origen teach the pre-existence of the soul, but also reincarnation. Yet passages exist among his writings which appear to express both belief and disbelief in reincarnation. Part of the problem is that a large proportion of his original Greek writings have been lost, and those that have survived have done so largely in a Latin translation provided by the notorious late-fourth-century Rufinus (*c.*340–410).

Rufinus took it upon himself, not only to translate Origen, but also to 'correct' him, and where both the original Greek and Rufinus' Latin version have survived, it is evident how much he indulges in paraphrasing, deletion, addition and general rewriting of Origen's original, correcting whatever he regards as Origen's 'heresies'. In a letter to a certain Macarius, he admits to this method, justifying it by saying that he had only removed what he deemed to be the 'heretical interpolations' of others and that he had 'clarified the meaning' by adding passages from Origen's other works where Origen was not in divergence from Christian faith, as Rufinus understood it. Nevertheless, he admits that he intends "to follow the rules of translation laid down by my predecessors", mentioning in particular a Bishop Damasus:

> He has rendered into Latin more than seventy of Origen's homiletical treatises and a few also of his commentaries upon the apostle (Paul); and in these, wherever the Greek text provides a stumbling block, he has smoothed it down in his version, and has so emended the language used that a Latin writer can find no word that is at variance with our faith.
>
> *Rufinus, Letter (LXXX:2) to Macarius, PWJ p.169*

For these reasons, scholars have usually regarded Rufinus as unreliable. But unfortunately, although other early Christians, including Jerome, also made Latin translations of Origen, only those of Rufinus have survived, and there is little doubt that many of the confusions and contradictions in Origen's writings can be traced to the 'translations' of Rufinus.

Jerome and Rufinus lived during the first hundred years after Christianity had received Imperial approval. Christianity was busy formalizing its beliefs and theology and, at the same time, Latin was gradually replacing Greek as the *lingua franca* of both the Roman Empire and Christianity. It was therefore necessary for translations to be made so that the Latin-speaking Christian fathers could read the writings of their predecessors.

Though praising Origen in his younger days, Jerome later became greatly antagonistic to Origen's views and, together with others, including Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria (infamous for instigating the burning of the ancient and world-famous library at Alexandria in 391 CE),

he conducted a crusade against Origen and his followers. Pope Anastasius also earned Jerome's approval for his condemnation (*c.*400) of Origen's teachings.[32]

For his part, Origen had made a thorough study of the works of Plato, Pythagoras, the Stoics and others. With this training in Greek philosophy, it would have been no surprise if he had taught reincarnation as a part of Christian doctrine, and both Jerome and Theophilus[33] attribute this belief to him. Jerome – who had the advantage of a Greek text in front of him, untouched by Rufinus – writes, quoting Origen:

> The following passage is a convincing proof that he (Origen) holds the transmigration of souls and annihilation of bodies. "If it can be shown that an incorporeal and spiritual being has life in itself independently of the body, and that it is worse off in the body than out of it, then beyond a doubt bodies are only of secondary importance, and arise from time to time to meet the varying conditions of spiritual creatures. Those who require bodies are clothed with them; and contrariwise, when fallen souls have lifted themselves up to better things, their bodies are once more annihilated. They are thus ever vanishing and ever reappearing."
>
> *Jerome (quoting Origen), Letter (CXXIV) to Avitus 15; cf. PWJ p.244*

As Origen's writings now stand, mostly in the Latin of Rufinus, Origen is often ambivalent or contrary in the way he speaks of reincarnation. Even so, in his reply to Celsus, the author of a treatise refuting Christianity, he does seem to endorse the view:

> Is it not more in conformity with reason (and I say this now following Pythagoras, Plato and Empedoclēs, whom Celsus often mentions) that there are certain hidden principles by which each soul that enters a body does so in accordance with its merits and former character?
>
> *Origen, Against Celsus I:32; cf. OCC p.32, WO1 p.432*

And again:

> The soul, which is immaterial and invisible in its nature, exists in no material place without having a body suited to the nature of that place. Accordingly, it at one time puts off one body which was necessary before, but which is no longer adequate in its changed state, and it exchanges it for a second.
>
> *Origen, Against Celsus VII:32, WO2 p.454*

And in *On First Principles,* he says:

> The soul has neither beginning nor end.... Every soul ... comes into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life. Its place in the world, as a vessel appointed to honour or dishonour, is determined by its previous merits or demerits. Its work (actions) in this world determines its place in the world which is to follow this.
>
> *Origen, On First Principles, in REWA p.36, RR p.75*

Origen himself, though controversial even in his own time, gained wide respect, and influenced the development of Christian doctrine for at least three centuries. Jerome at one time considered him to be the "greatest teacher of the Church after the apostles";[34] the late-fourth-century Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (374–395), was deeply influenced by Origen's teaching; and Origen's pupil and friend, Gregory Thaumaturgus (the 'Wonder-worker'), mid-third-century Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, spoke warmly in his *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen*[35] of Origen's charm of manner, his generous friendship, his wide sympathy, and his consummate wisdom.[36] He is a man, wrote Gregory, who "has already completed most of the preparation for re-ascent to the divine world", and whose "inner being conaturally touches God, though it is for the moment enclosed in what is visible and mortal".[37] It was through Origen, he said, that he had come to appreciate the Greek philosophers and their great relevance to the teachings of Jesus.

But the controversies surrounding Origen's teachings persisted, especially in the Eastern Church. In 543, a hundred and fifty years or so after the first controversies concerning Origen, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian issued a decree, approved by Pope Vigilius and the four patriarchs of the East, containing a number of anathemas (official curses) aimed at Origen.

From the earliest times, matters of Christian belief and creed were decided by councils of bishops and the higher clergy. But, dating from the era of Constantine, the course of such councils and their decisions was frequently under the authority of the emperor, whose interests were invariably political rather than spiritual. Some emperors interfered more than others, and early in the sixth century, Justinian, who had been at odds with Pope Vigilius for several years, assumed authority over the entire Church, issuing Imperial edicts that regulated public worship, dictated ecclesiastical discipline and even determined doctrine. By this time, only one centre teaching Greek philosophy remained, Plato's old Academy in Athens; and in 529 CE, Justinian, jealous of his reputation for strict orthodoxy, decreed that no one should henceforth teach the ancient philosophy, seen by many to be the main source of gnostic heresy. After nearly 1000 years of teaching, this last centre was closed, many of the scholars fleeing to Persia where they found sympathy for their doctrines. Throughout the empire, only Christian schools of learning were now permitted, and all philosophy was to be conducted within

the strict walls of an ever tightening, orthodox Christian dogma. The Dark Ages of ignorance had begun.

In 553, Justinian convened the Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople, ostensibly to bring peace between the Eastern and Western arms of the Church on doctrinal issues arising from the writings of three bishops. The history of the Fifth Council and the events surrounding it are complex, but the result was an even deeper schism which lasted until 610. The Council was held very much on Justinian's terms, and Pope Vigilius, although present in Constantinople, refused to attend although, under pressure from the Emperor, he later approved the decisions of the Council. Part of Vigilius' concern was that the Western Church was not fairly represented, for with the exception of five African bishops, all those present were from the East. Among the later items on the agenda were fifteen anathemas against Origen and his teachings, derived from Justinian's earlier decree. The first anathema was aimed directly at a belief in pre-existence and reincarnation:

> If anyone assert the fabulous pre-existence of souls, and shall assert the monstrous restoration which follows from it: let him be anathema.
>
> *Anathemas Against Origen I, SEC p.318*

Justinian's original draft was even more explicit:

> Whoever thinks that human souls pre-existed, … but that satiated with the vision of God, they had turned to evil, and in this way the divine love in them had died out, and they had therefore … been condemned to punishment in bodies, shall be anathema.
>
> *Anathematisms of the Emperor Justinian Against Origen I, SEC p.320*

From these it may be presumed that as late as the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church continued to attribute to Origen a belief in reincarnation as a part of Christian doctrine. Moreover, the fact that the Church felt it necessary to condemn Origen repeatedly, even in later Councils, indicates that the belief persisted and was sufficiently widespread to be a cause of concern. Nevertheless, despite Origen's condemnation in the East, his writings remained a source of inspiration in the West until the twelfth century and the rise of Aristotelianism, enjoying something of a revival during the Renaissance.

It must be obvious, however, that by the time Jesus' teachings had become the subject of Imperial edicts, ambitious clergy, warring bishops and exasperated popes, real understanding of the spirituality and path of love taught by Jesus had long since been buried deep beneath all the human stuff. History is written by the 'winners' who see only the chain of events involved in their own development. Modern Christianity traces its history from the

ancient, 'orthodox' stream of early Pauline Christianity. But orthodoxy in religion, philosophy, science and other human affairs is often synonymous with rigidity of mental outlook and an emphasis on material considerations. This can lead to power struggles, prejudice, hatred, infringement of the rights of others – even violence, destruction and murder. Orthodoxy is rarely the champion of truth.

Other Gnostics

Some of the gnostically minded Christians who taught or believed in reincarnation have already been considered in connection with their interpretation of the gospels, but there were a great many others, some of whose writings have also survived. Hippolytus, for instance, the early-third-century Bishop of Rome, writes of the Naassenes, a group of gnostic Christians who appear to have been his contemporaries, and who – like other gnostics – taught that the soul is trapped in matter by repeated rebirth. Hippolytus has a Naassene text in front of him as he writes, the author of which is evidently pointing out the mystic truths to be found in all the ancient religious traditions of his time and place. Hippolytus castigates him for this, accusing him of creating his 'system' out of the philosophies and mythologies of the past. Clearly, Hippolytus did not understand the universal nature of the mystics and their teachings.

Though Hippolytus' account is garbled, enough remains to establish that the Naassene writer is referring to the ancient myths of Mesopotamia, the Old Testament, the Greeks and the Romans, interpreting them allegorically and indicating their universal mystical meaning. The author says, for instance, that the Greek god, *Hermēs,* equivalent to the Roman Mercury, symbolizes the *Logos,* because the *Logos* carries God's 'message' or creative Power into creation, even appearing in this world as the "originator of souls", a "conjuror of the dead" and a "guide" – a divine Messenger or Master by whom souls are "awakened, and brought to recollection of themselves".[38]

At the same time, the writer also points out the mystic meaning of Jesus' sayings in the gospels, relating them to previous mystic teachings. Tantalizingly, Hippolytus only cites snatches of this Naassene text, except at the end of his short dissertation where he quotes a Naassene hymn. The hymn begins by speaking of God's First-born, creative Power, the divine Intelligence or Mind *(Nous).* From the *Nous* then emanates "bitter Chaos", the labyrinth of the mind created by the negative power through whose dominion the individual soul is incarnated in this world, held captive by the "law of toil". Subsequently, the soul wanders in the "labyrinth of ills", the maze of pain and pleasure, birth and death, until a Saviour is sent on a mission of redemption with the "secrets of the holy path called *gnosis*":

Mind *(Nous)* was the first, the generative Law of all;
Next was this First-born's Chaos then outpoured;
Thirdly, the soul received its law of toil.

Wherefore, surrounded with a nimble (changeable) form,
with care o'erpowered, it succumbs to death.
Now holding sway, it sees the light,
anon, cast into piteous plight, it weeps.
Now it weeps,
now thrills with joy;
And as it wails, it hears its doom (judgment),
now hears its doom, now dies....
Wandering haplessly,
it treads the labyrinth of ills.

But Jesus said, "Father, behold,
a strife of ills across the earth
makes (man) to wander from Your Breath (Spirit).
He seeks to shun the bitter Chaos,
but knows not how to flee.

"For this reason, O Father, send me.
Bearing seals (of release), I will descend;
Through all the *aeons* (realms) I will travel;
All mysteries will I reveal,
and show the forms of gods (to those I save).
The secrets of the holy path
called *gnosis* will I impart."

Naassene Hymn, in Refutation of All Heresies V:5; cf. FFF pp.205–6, RAH p.153

It seems evident that were these ancient writings available in their entirety or even in larger fragments than have survived, they would provide much material to support the present thesis. For very commonly, among the Nag Hammadi library and other extant gnostic texts, as well as among the apocryphal literature, references are found to the soul being held captive in the prison of the body, being rescued by a Saviour from the darkness of this world, ascending from the realm of death, and so on. Many of these writings are of a Christian character, and presume that Jesus gave these teachings.

The *Apocalypse of Paul,* for instance, relates a traditional revelational account of an ascent through the heavens, the central character on this occasion being the apostle Paul. In the fourth heaven, he witnesses the judgment of a soul who leaves this world, the "land of the dead". And the soul is quite unaware of the sins it had been committing:

In the fourth heaven …
  I saw the angels resembling gods,
  the angels bringing a soul out of the land of the dead.
They placed it at the gate of the fourth heaven,
  and the angels were whipping it.
The soul spoke, saying,
  "What sin was it that I committed in the world?"

The toll collector who dwells
  in the fourth heaven replied, saying,
"It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds
  that are in the world of the dead."

The soul replied, saying,
"Bring witnesses! Let them show you
  in what body I committed lawless deeds.
Do you wish to bring a book to read from?"

Apocalypse of Paul 20, NHS11 pp.54–55

Three witnesses are then brought forward to testify against the soul who then realizes the truth of what they say. The 'revelation' then continues:

When the soul heard these things,
  it gazed downward in sorrow.
And then it gazed upward.
It was cast down.
The soul that had been cast down went
  to a body which had been prepared for it.
And behold its witnesses were finished.

Apocalypse of Paul 21, NHS11 pp.56–57

In another text, the *Dialogue of the Saviour,* Jesus points out that a person suffers from whatever he does not understand. Thus, he who does not understand birth will not understand death, and "he is no stranger to this world" – he will suffer for his lack of understanding by returning repeatedly to this world:

> If one does not understand how fire came into existence, he will burn in it, because he does not know the root of it.… If one does not understand how the body, which he bears, came into existence, he will perish with it.… Someone who will not know the root (source) of wickedness is no stranger to it. Whoever will not understand how he

> came (into birth) will not understand how he will go (at death), and he is no stranger to this world.
>
> *Dialogue of the Saviour 134:35, NHS26 p.69*

Again, according to a revelational story related in the *Apocryphon of John,* speaking of the mind as the "counterfeit spirit", the spiritual form of Jesus is answering questions put to him by the disciple John. The dialogue is joined where Jesus is telling John that, while incarnate in the body, the soul upon whom the Spirit of Life "descends" will definitely "attain salvation". It is John who is relating the story:

> He (the Saviour) answered and said to me, "If the Spirit descends upon them, it is quite sure that they will attain salvation.... Indeed, the Power (Holy Spirit) descends to everyone – for without it, no one can exist. And after they are born, if the Spirit of Life increases, and the Power comes and strengthens that soul, then nothing can lead it astray into evil ways. But those on whom the counterfeit spirit descends will be beguiled by it, and will be led astray."
>
> *Apocryphon of John 26; cf. GS p.48, NHS33 p.151*

The "Power" or the "Spirit" is present within everybody, else they could not exist in this world. The Spirit is the essence of life. But if the "Power comes and strengthens" them, if they are baptized or initiated, then the "Spirit of Life increases": then the soul becomes increasingly conscious of the Spirit within, and is greatly strengthened by it. Nothing can now lead that soul away from the spiritual path. But those who become victims of the "counterfeit spirit" (the mind) are "beguiled" and "led astray". The dialogue continues:

> And I said, "Sir, so when the souls of these people have come forth from their flesh, where will they go?"
>
> And he smiled and said to me, "The soul in which the Power becomes stronger than the counterfeit spirit will be strong, and will flee from wickedness. And by the intervention (grace) of the incorruptible One, it will attain salvation, and be taken into the repose of the *aeons* (eternity)."
>
> *Apocryphon of John 26; cf. GS p.48, NHS33 pp.151, 153*

The soul in which the Spirit has taken root will, by His grace, be taken back to God.

> And I said, "Sir, where then will the souls of these others, who have not known to whom they belong, reside?"

> And he said to me, "In the case of those others, the counterfeit spirit gains strength within them when they go astray. And it weighs down the soul, and beguiles it into evil ways, and casts it into forgetfulness. And after it has come forth (from the body at death), it is handed over to the *archons* (rulers) who came into being through the (great) *Archon.* And they bind it with chains and cast it into the prison (of the body). And they remain with it until it awakens from forgetfulness, and acquires *gnosis.* And if, thus, it becomes perfect, it attains salvation."
>
> *Apocryphon of John 26–27; cf. GS p.48, NHS33 pp.153, 155*

But the others, who have followed the inclinations and promptings of their own mind, the "counterfeit spirit", fall into forgetfulness of God. They fall asleep so far as He is concerned. And after death they are taken by the *"archons"*, the lesser powers who operate within the rule of the great *"Archon"*, the negative power. They "bind it with chains" of its own sins and "cast it into the prison" of the body, staying with it and keeping it bound until such time as the soul awakens, gains true knowledge, and attains salvation.

The graphic term "counterfeit spirit" is identified in a number of the gnostic texts as the cause of sin and consequent bondage to the body. In the *Pistis Sophia,* Mary Magdalene asks Jesus, "Who compels men until they commit sin?" It is a good question, and Jesus explains that a human being is comprised of the "Power", the "soul", and the "counterfeit spirit", all three being bound together in a physical body.[39] The Power is the Creative Word, the "soul" is the drop of that Power, and the "counterfeit spirit" is the mind with its material desires and tendencies. Jesus goes on to observe that the soul is pulled towards the world by the "counterfeit spirit", and is drawn towards eternity by the "Power within" – the Spirit:

> The Power within moves the soul to seek after the region of the Light (eternity) and the whole Godhead. And the counterfeit spirit inclines the soul, and compels it to commit all its iniquities, with all its passions and all its sins continually. And it remains allotted to the soul, and it is hostile to it, and causes it to commit all these wicked things and all these sins.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 283:111; cf. PS pp.566–67, PSGG p.236*

Even when a person is resting or dreaming, he continues, the "counterfeit spirit" continues to project worldly desires before him. It causes the soul "to do what it does not wish", and it becomes the "enemy of the soul".[40]

Jesus' reply is lengthy, but in essence he says that the soul continues in this way until the time of death, all its sins being witnessed by the "retributive ministers", the administrators of the mind, the lesser powers or

archons in creation. Or it can be said that all the deeds of the soul are witnessed by the mind itself which registers corresponding impressions. Then, at the time of death, the soul is taken by the "retributive receivers", the angels of death, is judged, and is allotted a place accordingly, the sinful soul being punished in hell. Jesus points out that at this stage the "counterfeit spirit" itself becomes the guide or "receiver" of the soul. The soul is forced to go wherever the mind leads it, "according to the chastisement (due to the soul) on account of the sins which it has caused it to commit".[41]

After its "chastisement" in hell is over, the soul is brought before *Heimarmenē* (*lit.* apportioned), a name used by the fifth-century (BCE) Greek philosopher, Empedoclēs, for the goddess in charge of the processes of transmigration and the apportioning of appropriate destinies.[42] The soul is then handed over to her "receivers" or helpers and is

> cast ... into a body which is worthy of the sins which it has committed. And verily I say to you that she does not release that soul from the changes of the body before it has completed its last cycle, according to its due.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 285:111; cf. PS pp.570–73, PSGG p.238*

Jesus then concludes this description by echoing his words in St Matthew, "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing"[43] – an allusion demonstrating once again the meaning these early Christians gave to this saying.

The inner journey of an initiated soul which has "received the mysteries of light" and has not fallen a prey to the "counterfeit spirit" during its physical lifetime is then described. When the time comes for such a soul which "has not listened to the counterfeit spirit" to leave the body, the "counterfeit spirit" goes along with the soul as it ascends towards the "Height", the eternity of God. On the journey, there comes a point where the mind or "counterfeit spirit" and its encrusted "destiny" or store of past sins, are "released" or left behind. They return to their place of origin, the "regions of the *archons*" whence they came.[44] The soul then becomes free and naked, glowing with its own great radiance:

> And in that moment it (the soul) becomes a great outpouring of light, shining exceedingly. And the retributive receivers which have brought it forth from the body are afraid at the light of that soul, and they fall upon their faces. And in that moment, that soul becomes a great outpouring of light and becomes entirely winged with light, and penetrates all the regions of the *archons* and all their orders of light, until it goes to the region of its kingdom.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 287:112; cf. PS pp.574–75, PSGG p.239*

The "retributive receivers" who had at one time caused the soul such great distress, casting it into hell and into body after body, are now in awe of the pure soul's splendour and its innate robe of glory. Now the soul is so powerful that its consciousness "penetrates all regions of the *archons* and all their orders of light":

> And that soul dismisses their destiny to them, saying: "Receive back your destiny; I do not come to your regions from this time (onwards): I have become a stranger unto you forever, being about to go to the region of my inheritance...."
>
> And it says to them: "There, take your counterfeit spirit; I do not come to your regions from this time onwards; I have become a stranger to you forever."
>
> *Pistis Sophia 289:112; cf. PS pp.578–81, PSGG p.241*

The soul dismisses the "counterfeit spirit" and its associated "destiny" or store of sins, saying that it will now no longer be returning to their realms, that it is going onwards to eternity to claim its rightful "inheritance". In this narrative, then, Jesus is relating the story of the liberation of the soul from the clutches of the mind, the realm of the *archons,* and from the accumulated effect of sins from countless past lives. This is the beginning of true salvation, culminating in union with God.

Concluding this dialogue, John then asks what becomes of the person who has committed all manner of sins, but does at last come to a Saviour and receive the "mysteries of the Light":

> John said: "A man who has committed every sin and every iniquity, but has at last found the mysteries of the Light: is it possible for him to be saved?"
>
> Jesus said: "Such a one who has committed every sin and every iniquity, and finds the mysteries of the Light, and performs them and completes them, and does not cease from them, nor does he commit sin: he will inherit the treasury of the Light."
>
> *Pistis Sophia 383:148; cf. PS pp.766–67, PSGG p.324*

Jesus replies that if such a soul fulfils everything that is expected of him after receiving initiation, if he lives his life purely and correctly, and attends diligently to his spiritual practice, then "he will inherit the treasury of the Light" – then he will be taken back to God.

As Jesus also says in an earlier part of these dialogues, he knows that his disciples have undergone great suffering from their "transferences into different kinds of bodies", and their consequent struggles. But now, having "received the mysteries of purification", they have "become refined light,

exceedingly purified" – having been initiated, they have detached themselves from the world and from the body. So, when they leave the body, they "will go to the Height". They will "enter into all the regions of all the great emanations of the Light", becoming "rulers (kings) in the eternal kingdom of the Light".[45] In fact,

> all the *archons* will be put to shame before you, because you have come from the dregs of their matter, and you have now become light more pure than all of them.
>
> *Pistis Sophia 252:100; cf. PS pp.504–5, PSGG p.209*

The *archons* of the lower realms will "be put to shame", so to speak, because souls from the pits of matter have become so purified that they can now pass beyond all such lower rulers.

Transmigration

Mystics who have taught the path of the Word have characteristically taught that the soul can also descend into lower forms, that is to say, transmigration of the soul or, as the Greek philosophers called it, *metempsychosis*. Not only does the soul return to this world, but it can also go down the scale, and take birth in one of the lower species. This is why physical bodies have been called graves, tombs, prisons, dungeons and pits.

Mystics point out that the law of cause and effect is strict. "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." All deeds and desires must be accounted for. Nothing is ever wasted in nature. A bestial human life may result in a corresponding animal or lower life, while an animal of unselfish and caring disposition may be reborn as a human being.

Mystics also say that the human form is a special opportunity, for in no other form can the soul begin the journey back to God. The human form is blessed with the faculty of discrimination. Metaphorically, man has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and in that sense he has the capacity to make a choice in all his actions. Essentially, this choice, hemmed in on all sides by circumstance and destiny, is that within himself he can move towards God or towards the world. As Jesus said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[46]

Man has this much free will, say the mystics: to seek God or to deny Him. Although his present free will is deeply conditioned by his past, man has been created with this dispensation and blessing. From God's point of view, this is His purpose in creating the human form. Other species do not have this chance. They are creatures of instinct and the lower in the order they are, the less is their degree of consciousness and the more they are hemmed in by preprogrammed instincts. Their mental apparatus is different from that

of man. As the Greek and other mystics have said, the soul is the same, but the overcoat and other garments that surround it are constituted differently.

The human form, therefore, is a precious opportunity not to be wasted. This is probably the meaning of Jesus' parable of the three servants, where each is given a lump sum for investment, and why the master says of the one who wastes the opportunity:

> Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
>
> *Matthew 25:28–30, KJV*

What a human being, a potential servant of the Lord, "hath" is the human form. But if he does not use it profitably in the quest for God – the purpose for which it has been uniquely designed by God – then it is taken away from him, and he loses the opportunity. This is perhaps what Jesus means in Matthew when he says to his disciples, concerning those who do not understand and accept his teachings:

> It is given unto you to know
> the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,
> but to them it is not given.
> For whosoever hath, to him shall be given,
> and he shall have more abundance;
> But whosoever hath not,
> from him shall be taken away even that he hath.
>
> *Matthew 13:11–12, KJV*

Knowing Jesus' teaching of love and compassion, this seems harsh. Yet he is making the distinction between the mercy of the Master and the justice of the negative power. Those who are "given … to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" are the disciples of the Master. They are "whosoever hath" – and they will be given more and more from the Master's treasury. Ultimately, they will receive everything, and will be taken back to God. But "whosoever hath not", he will lose "even that he hath": he will lose the opportunity of having taken human form, and may even have to go down the scale of evolution into lower species.

As the gnostic writer of the *Gospel of Philip* points out, every soul automatically gravitates towards its own kind, an individual usually receiving help and love only from another who is at the same level. So if a person becomes like an animal, then spiritually speaking, there is no one who can help:

> Human beings associate (*lit.* breed) with human beings. Horses associate with horses, donkeys associate with donkeys. Members of a species usually associate with those of the same species. Just so, spirit unites with spirit ... and light merges with light. If you are born a human being, it is human beings who will love you. If you become spirit, spirit will unite with you. If you become light, then light will merge with you. If you become (like) the Word, then the Word will join with you. If you become one of those who belong above, it is those who belong above who will be with (*lit.* rest upon) you. If you become a horse or ass or bull or dog or sheep or another of the animals which are outside or below, then neither human being nor spirit ... nor light will be able to love you. Neither those who belong above nor those who belong within will be able to be with you, and you will have no part with them.
>
> *Gospel of Philip 78–79; cf. GS p.349, NHS20 pp.198–201*

The uniqueness of the human form is brought out clearly by the mid-second-century Christian philosopher, Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew.* The book consists of a dialogue, presented in the Platonic style, between Justin and Trypho, a Jew, concerning the doctrines of Christianity. How much – if any – of the conversation is historical is unknown; it is the content which is of significance, here.

Before reading this excerpt, it needs to be noted that terms for mind, soul, intellect, personality, being, ego and the like are commonly interchanged by scholars, philosophers and translators, ancient and modern. This can often be confusing when reading ancient writings, whether in translation or in the original language. Even in modern times, the terms 'mind', 'soul' and 'spirit' have a wide spread of meaning, depending upon their context, and who is using them. In the case of Justin Martyr, he was a philosopher-theologian, not a mystic, and although he describes the soul as the divine, immortal essence in man, it is not entirely clear how he thinks of the human mind, for he speaks of the mind as being able to see God. The general meaning of the passage is not impaired, however, and the dialogue is joined where Trypho and Justin are discussing whether it is soul or the bodily senses which can see God:

> "Is there then," says he (Trypho), "such and so great power in our mind? Or can a man not perceive by sense sooner? Will the mind of man see God at any time, if it is uninstructed by the Holy Spirit?"
>
> "Plato indeed says," replied I, "that the eye of the mind is of such a nature, and has been given for this end, that we may see that very Being when the mind is pure itself, who is the Cause of all discerned by the mind, having no colour, no form, no greatness – nothing, indeed,

which the bodily eye looks upon; but it is something of this sort, he goes on to say, that is beyond all essence, unutterable and inexplicable, but alone honourable and good, coming suddenly into souls well-dispositioned on account of their affinity to and desire of seeing Him."

"What affinity, then," replied he, "is there between us and God? Is the soul also divine and immortal, and a part of that divine Mind *(Nous)?* And even as that sees God, so also is it attainable by us to conceive of the Deity in our mind, and thence to become happy?"

"Assuredly," I said.

"And do all the souls of all living beings comprehend Him," he asked, "or are the souls of men of one kind, and the souls of horses and of asses of another kind?"

"No, but the souls which are in all are similar," I answered.

"Then," says he, "shall both horses and asses see God, or have they seen Him at some time or other?"

"No," I said, "for the majority of men will not, except those that live justly, purified by righteousness, and by every other virtue."

"Is it not, therefore," said he, "because of his affinity, that a man sees God, nor because he has a mind, but because he is temperate and righteous?"

"Yes," said I, "and because he has that whereby he perceives God."

"What then? Do goats or sheep injure any one?"

"No one in any respect," I said.

"Therefore these animals will see (God) according to your account," says he.

"No, for their body being of such a nature is an obstacle to them."

He rejoined, "If these animals could assume speech, be well assured that they would with greater reason ridicule our body; but let us now discuss this subject, and let it be conceded to you as you say. Tell me, however, this: Does the soul see (God) so long as it is in the body, or after it has been removed from it?"

"So long as it is in the form of a man, it is possible for it," I continued, "to attain to this by means of the mind; but especially when it has been set free from the body, and being apart by itself, it gets possession of that which it was wont continually and wholly to love." ...

"And what do those suffer who are judged to be unworthy of this spectacle?", said he.

"They are imprisoned in the bodies of certain wild beasts, and this is their punishment."

"Do they know, then, that it is for this reason they are in such forms, and that they have committed some sin?"

"I do not think so."

"Then it seems that they reap no advantage from their punishment; moreover, I would say that they are not punished unless they are conscious of the punishment."

"No, indeed."

"Therefore souls neither see God nor transmigrate into other bodies; for they would know that so they are punished, and they would be afraid to commit even the most trivial sin afterwards. But that they can perceive that God exists, and that righteousness and piety are honourable, I also quite agree with you," said he.

"You are right," I replied.

Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 4; cf. WJMA pp.91–93

From this passage, it is clear that Justin accepts the divinity, immortality and hence the pre-existence of the soul, and that he believes souls encased in the bodies of lower species to be the same as those within human beings. But like Augustine, he seems undecided as to whether souls transmigrate or not. All the same, the fact that he raises the issue demonstrates that the question was a valid one at that very early period in the development of Christian thought.

That Jesus taught transmigration as well as reincarnation is reinforced by the teachings of the third-century Iranian mystic, Mānī (c.216–276 CE). Mānī taught that Jesus, like himself, had been a Saviour of souls from the cycle of birth and death, including transmigration into lower forms. Many Manichaean hymns even appeal to Jesus as such a Saviour:

Protect me in my corporeal existence, Jesus.
O Lord, save my soul from this birth-death:
full of love is your throne, bright …

Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.67, ML p.107

Soon after the departure of Mānī and his appointed successors, his teachings, like those of Jesus, became the focus of a new religion which acknowledged both Mānī and Jesus as Saviours. These Manichaeans were treated with great enmity and hostility by the Christians, but despite the burning of their books, and the killing and prejudicial treatment of their people, they survived until late into the Middle Ages, only finally disappearing during the thirteenth century. By that time, the European remnants of Manichaeism had merged with gnostic Christianity. In a last flourishing of this ancient gnostic stream, over seventy groups, under different names, were to be found throughout Europe, many – like their far earlier counterparts – considering themselves the true heirs of Christianity, following Jesus' real teachings. For the most part, they believed in the transmigration of the soul, and that

Jesus' earthly mission had been the liberation of earthbound, captive souls. Despite the efforts of the orthodox, the early Christian belief in reincarnation had not been suppressed.

The collective name given to these medieval gnostics was the Cathars, meaning the 'pure ones', from the same root as *catharsis* (purification). There were the Paterins of Italy, the German Cathars, the Paulicians of Armenia, the Bogomils of Bulgaria and the Albigensians of southern France. Keeping company with them were other esoteric groups including the Knights Templars, the Troubadours of southern Europe, the Rosicrucians, the Hermetic philosophers and the Alchemists. These too, together with the Jewish Kabbalists, Islamic gnostic groups such as the Ishmaelis *(Ismā'īlīyah),* and some of the Sufi mystics, all openly taught reincarnation.

So widespread did the Cathars become in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that Henry Lea wrote in his definitive study of the Inquisition that the movement

> spread so rapidly and resisted so stubbornly the sternest efforts of suppression that at one time it may be fairly said to have threatened the permanent existence of Christianity itself.
>
> *Henry Lea, The History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages, HIMA1 p.89*

Few people realize that what was later formalized as the Inquisition was begun by Pope Innocent III (1160–1216) with the express purpose of eradicating the Albigensians – by force. So well-respected were the Albigensians of the Languedoc area of France, and so beloved and trusted were they for their industry, morality and general sweetness, that they were dubbed *'les bons hommes',* the good men. Their intention was to restore the original purity of Jesus' teachings of love and spirituality in their own lives, and they actually tried to practise Jesus' precepts as preserved in the gospels. Large numbers of people in Toulouse, Beziers and other cities were of this faith, where they had the protection of the powerful Count Raymond of Toulouse. The character and quality of their education, local government and social structure were also far in advance of their age, and they had for so long enjoyed the freedom to worship in their own way that the local orthodox clergy feared to discipline them.

Pope Innocent, realizing that they posed a threat to the Catholic Church, summoned the nobles of Europe to a crusade, the first ever waged by Christians against Christians. The Albigensians' rich lands and property were to be the prize, and for all those who took part the Pope generously proclaimed complete forgiveness of all sins, not only of the past but of any future time as well. Moreover, as a bonus, all debts owed by the crusaders to Jewish moneylenders were to be cancelled.

First blood was drawn at the massacre of Beziers on July 22nd 1209. When Abbot Arnaud-Amaury, the commander of the crusade, was asked how they should distinguish the heretics from the faithful, he replied, "Slay all, God will know his own."[47] And six or seven thousand people were massacred in the church of St Madeleine alone, probably one of the greatest slaughters of innocent people Europe had seen for centuries.

Surely someone at that time must have recalled the words of Jesus as he spoke to his disciples towards the end of his days, warning them of the difficult times ahead, and the extremes of conduct that would be shown by religious zealots and prejudiced rulers:

> Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you
> will think that he doeth God service.
> And these things will they do unto you,
> because they have not known the Father, nor me.
> *John 16:2–3, KJV*

At that time, Jesus was referring to the Jews and Romans. In later centuries, it was Christians themselves who merited this description.

The wars against the Albigensians, with their inquisitional courts and intermittent periods of peace, continued for a further forty-six years until the surrender of Queribus in 1255. But the 'success' of this means of discovering, suppressing and extirpating 'heresy' proved so appealing to the popes and catholic clergy that the Inquisition was formally founded in 1232 to carry on the work – a malevolent organization that remained in existence for six centuries until its formal dissolution in 1820.

Gnosticism and reincarnation, as Christian belief, were forced underground. Only the most daring of philosophers, writers and theologians ever voiced such doctrines in public. Not until the second half of the nineteenth century did gnosticism begin to surface once again. Indeed, this 'lost chord' of Jesus' teachings is still only slowly being rediscovered.

See also: **blindness** (6.2), **counterfeit spirit** (5.1), **darkness** (6.2), **drunkenness** (6.2), **grave** (6.2), **karma, law of cause and effect, reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy), reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism), reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism), sin (in early Christianity)** (6.2), **tanāsukh**.

1. *cf.* Luke's much later, conflicting record in *Acts* 9:19–30.
2. *Mark* 3:7–8, *KJV*.
3. *Acts* 6:5, 9:10,32*ff.*, 11:1*ff.*, *passim.*
4. For a more detailed account, see **Christianity** (1.5).
5. *e.g. 1 Corinthians* 15:35*ff.*

6. *e.g. 1 Corinthians* 15:3.
7. *e.g.* Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* VI:16.
8. *Psalm* 19:9, *KJV.*
9. *Psalm* 92:15, *KJV.*
10. *Psalm* 119:67, *KJV.*
11. *Psalm* 142:7, *KJV.*
12. *John* 9:2.
13. *John* 5:14, 8:11; see also *Matthew* 9:2.
14. *John* 5:14.
15. *Luke* 13:1–5.
16. *Romans* 7:9.
17. *Luke* 15:4–7; *Matthew* 18:11–14.
18. *cf.* the Nag Hammadi text, *Expository Treatise on the Soul, NHS21* pp.144–69.
19. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* VII:17, *WCA2* pp.485–88.
20. Theodotus, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 78; *cf. ETCA* p.89, *GRJ* p.45.
21. *e.g. John* 9:39, 12:40; *Luke* 4:18–19; *Matthew* 13:13–17; also, *Gospel of Thomas* 38:28.
22. *e.g. John* 1:5, 8:12.
23. *e.g. Gospel of Thomas* 38:28.
24. *e.g. John* 5:28–29.
25. *e.g. John* 8:21–24,31–36; *Matthew* 10:29–30, 12:36–37.
26. *John* 8:14*ff.*
27. *John* 8:21, 24, *KJV.*
28. *Matthew* 7:6.
29. *1 Corinthians* 2:14.
30. *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, DAA* pp.44–45.
31. Some scholars suggest that it was another Origen who attended the discourses of Ammonius Saccas. Either way, there is no doubt that Origen the Christian philosopher was deeply immersed in Greek thought.
32. Jerome, *Letter (CXXVII) to Principia* 10, *PWJ* p.256.
33. See Jerome, *Letters (XCVII–XCVIII) to/from Theophilus, PWJ* pp.187–88.
34. Jerome, *Homilies on Ezekiel, Preface, OFP* p.i; adopted by Jerome from Didymus, blind theologian of Alexandria.
35. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyric on Origen, WTDA* p.36*ff.*
36. G.W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles, OFP* p.iii.
37. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen* 2:10, 13, *SGT* pp.13, 93.
38. Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* V:2, *RAH* pp.135–36.
39. *Pistis Sophia* 281:111; *cf. PS* pp.562–65, *PSGG* p.235.
40. *Pistis Sophia* 283:111; *cf. PS* pp.566–69, *PSGG* p.236.
41. *Pistis Sophia* 284:111; *cf. PS* pp.568–69, *PSGG* p.237.

42. Porphyry, in Stobaeus, *Anthology* I:49.60, *SDMG* pp.54–55.
43. *Matthew* 5:26.
44. *Pistis Sophia* 286:112; *cf. PS* pp.572–75, *PSGG* pp.238–39.
45. *Pistis Sophia* 252:100, *PS* pp.504–5.
46. *Matthew* 6:24.
47. "Albigenses", in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 9th edn.

reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism) The first definitive occurrence of the doctrines of reincarnation and transmigration in Jewish literature is found in the anonymous twelfth-century Kabbalist text, the *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance)* originating in Provence, France. There is nothing in the Hebrew Bible itself which points directly to a belief in reincarnation, although a number of passages are sometimes interpreted in that way. Included among these is an otherwise enigmatic saying found in both *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*. Moses, speaking in the name of God, says:

> I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.
>
> *Deuteronomy 5:9, Exodus 20:5, KJV*

The passage can be taken at face value as the doctrine of a vengeful God or, as some Jewish commentators have explained it, as teaching the law of retribution for sin, an accepted part of Jewish belief. However, since it may be presumed that God would not be so unmerciful as to make children and grandchildren suffer for the sins of their parents and grandparents, the passage is sometimes taken as a reference to reincarnation. It suggests that people are responsible across many lifetimes for the sins of one life. Today the individual is a parent; tomorrow he may incarnate as his own grandchild and have to suffer the consequences of his earlier actions.

This interpretation is by no means new. Nearly two thousand years ago, followers of the Alexandrian gnostic, Basilidēs (*fl.* 124–135), said the same. Theodotus, a mid-third-century gnostic, recalls:

> The followers of Basilidēs refer "God visiting the disobedient unto the third and fourth generation" to reincarnation.
>
> *Theodotus, Excerpta ex Theodoto 28, ETCA p.63*

Though absent from the Bible in any explicit form, the belief did exist among some early Jews, as it did among gnostic and other esoteric groups. In ancient times, in Greek and probably Egyptian esoteric schools as well, reincarnation was often a part of the secret teachings or mysteries revealed

only to initiates. It is therefore possible that the same was also true of some early Jewish esoteric movements.

There was considerable interaction between Jewish and Greek cultures. Especially in the last three centuries BCE, many Jews were greatly influenced by the extensive Hellenization which spread throughout practically all Mediterranean countries, including Palestine. Greek became the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, and for numerous Jews, especially those living outside Palestine, Greek was their main language. Many Jews were thus imbued with Greek philosophy, as well as Judaism, and sought to build bridges between the two. And since reincarnation and transmigration were an intrinsic part of Greek philosophy, the doctrine was included in the synthesis.

The first-century Alexandrian Jew, Philo Judaeus, for example, was a proponent of reincarnation, and clearly saw no incompatibility between his allegorical and mystical interpretation of the Jewish scriptures and Greek mystical thought. Echoing an allegory in Plato's *Phaedrus* concerning the immortal divinity of the soul and its incarnations in the material world,[1] Philo writes:

> The air is the abode of incorporeal souls, since it seemed good to their Maker to fill all parts of the universe with living beings.... (Some) souls, such as have earthward tendencies and material tastes, descend to be fast bound in mortal bodies, while others ascend.... Of these last, some, longing for the familiar and accustomed ways of mortal life, again retrace their steps, while others, pronouncing that life great foolery, call the body a prison and a tomb, and escaping as though from a dungeon or a grave, are lifted up on light wings to the upper air, and range the heights forever.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Dreams I:22, PCW5 pp.368–71*

In another book, again alluding to Plato's allegory, he says:

> Some of the souls have descended into bodies, but others have never deigned to be brought into union with any of the parts of earth.... But the others, descending into the body as though into a stream, have sometimes been caught in the swirl of its rushing torrent and swallowed up thereby; at other times, they have been able to stem the current, have risen to the surface, and then soared upwards back to the place from whence they came.
>
> These last, then, are the souls of those who have given themselves to genuine philosophy (*lit.* love of wisdom), who from first to last study to die to the life of the body, that a higher existence immortal and incorporeal, in the presence of Him who is Himself immortal and uncreated, may be their portion.

> But the souls which have sunk beneath the stream are the souls of the others who have held no count of wisdom. They have abandoned themselves to the unstable things of chance, none of which has aught to do with our noblest part, the soul or mind, but all are related to that dead thing which was our birth-fellow, the body, or to objects more lifeless still: glory, wealth, and offices and honours, and all other illusions which like images or pictures are created through the deceit of false opinion by those who have never gazed upon true beauty.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On the Giants 3, PCW2 pp.450–53*

Little is really known of Jewish esoteric movements in the last two centuries BCE, but foremost among them must have been the Essenes. Probably originating in the mid-second century BCE and still in existence at the time of Jesus, they are reported by the first-century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, to have believed in the immortality of the soul and its escape from the bodily prison, concepts not usually associated with traditional Judaism. Josephus, writing in Greek and conversant with Greek mystical philosophy, observes that "these men live the same kind of life as do those whom the Greeks call Pythagoreans."[2] From this it may be presumed that their beliefs were mystical or esoteric, that they were probably vegetarian, and that – like the Pythagoreans – they also believed in reincarnation.

As in Plato's allegory, the immortality of the soul and its imprisonment in the body were closely linked aspects of Greek mystical thought. Thus, Josephus also writes of the Essenes:

> The opinion obtains among them that while the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent, the soul is immortal and imperishable. Emanating from the subtlest aether (spirit), these souls become entangled, as it were, in the prison house of the body, to which they are drawn by some natural spell. But when once they are released from the bonds of the flesh, then, as though liberated from a long captivity, they rejoice and are borne aloft. Sharing the same belief as the sons of Greece …
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.11 (154–55); cf. J2 pp.380–83, JW p.136*

Apart from a report by Philo Judaeus[3] and a brief mention by the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, who speaks of an Essene settlement on the western shores of the Dead Sea,[4] little else is said about them by the writers of antiquity. Despite a wealth of twentieth-century 'apocrypha', therefore, modern knowledge of the Essenes would have rested largely on these three reports had it not been for the remarkable discovery, between 1947 and 1956, of many ancient scrolls in caves near the ruins of Khirbet Qumran, on the northwestern shores of the Dead Sea. One of the prevalent theories is

that Qumran was the Essene settlement mentioned by Pliny, and that these Dead Sea Scrolls were their library.

The Qumran group appear to have originated with a spiritual leader referred to in the Scrolls as the Teacher of Righteousness. So if the group at Qumran and the Essenes had the same origins, and if – as Josephus suggests – the Essenes believed in reincarnation, then it would seem likely that the Teacher of Righteousness taught reincarnation, and that the later Essene belief originated with him.

Unfortunately, there are no texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls that can with certainty be attributed to the Teacher of Righteousness. Even so, a number of scholars have attributed a collection of psalms – dating from about the second century BCE and possessing a particular beauty, purity and essentially spiritual character – to this Teacher of Righteousness. "Righteousness" in this context, incidentally, means 'holiness' or 'spirituality'.

Although the interpretation is speculative, there are a number of passages in these psalms which can be understood as allusions to reincarnation. Man, for instance – described as an "edifice of dust" – is said to be a "straying" or wandering spirit. "Straying" has a double meaning, for man strays from the path of spirituality into sin, and also strays and wanders in the round of birth and death. The metaphor echoes Greek mystical terminology, for a similar expression *(planasthai)* is commonly found in Greek and gnostic texts as a specific allusion to the seemingly aimless wandering of the soul through birth and death:

> He (man) is but an edifice of dust,
> and a thing kneaded with water,
> whose beginning is sinful iniquity,
> and shameful nakedness,
> and a fount of uncleanness;
> And over whom a spirit of straying rules.
>
> *Thanksgiving Hymns V:14–15 (3), CDSS p.247*

In a similar vein, the same writer humbly speaks of himself as a "straying and perverted spirit" who is "fearful of righteous judgments". He describes himself as:

> a shape of clay kneaded in water,
> a ground of shame and a source of pollution,
> a melting pot of wickedness and an edifice of sin,
> a straying and perverted spirit of no understanding,
> fearful of righteous judgments.
>
> *Thanksgiving Hymns IX:20–25 (6), CDSS p.254*

In another of these psalms, it is contact with the ever new and vital Word which causes the "straying spirit to return" to God:

> For into an ear of dust Thou hast put a new Word,
> and hast engraved on a heart of stone, things everlasting.
> Thou hast caused the straying spirit to return
> that it may enter into a Covenant with Thee;
> And stand before Thee for ever
> in the everlasting abode.
>
> *Thanksgiving Hymns XXI:25–30 (24), CDSS p.294*

The Teacher of Righteousness met with considerable opposition to his teaching, and it is highly unlikely that he would have written explicitly about such beliefs as reincarnation. Ultimately, he even met his death at the instigation of his Jewish opponents, just as John the Baptist and Jesus did, one or two centuries later. So the most that can be expected in his writings are veiled hints. Only his direct disciples, the recipients of his oral and private teaching, would have known his full meaning.

Even so, it does seem as if reincarnation was partially acceptable in Pharisaism, at least during the first century CE. The Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes represented the three main forces in Judaism at that time, and there is no doubt that Pharisaism had its esoteric side, especially in the form of the *Merkavah* mystics. Josephus, himself a Pharisee, writes:

> They (the Pharisees) say that all souls are imperishable, but that the souls of good men only pass into other bodies, while the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.14 (163); cf. J2 pp.384–87, JCW p.478*

Josephus accompanied Titus, commander-in-chief of the Roman campaign against the Jewish uprising which culminated in the siege and sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE. In *The Jewish War,* he records a speech made by the Jewish leader, Eleazar ben Yair, to a group of freedom fighters at the hilltop fort of Masada before one of the last and inevitably fatal encounters with the Romans. Many of the Jewish soldiers preferred to kill themselves rather than be captured by the Romans, and Eleazar tried to dissuade them by appealing to a belief in reincarnation:

> The bodies of all men are, indeed, mortal, and are created out of perishable matter; the soul lives forever, immortal; it is a portion of the Deity housed in our bodies.... Do you not know that those who depart from this life in accordance with the law of nature – and repay the loan which was received from God, when He who lent it is

> pleased to reclaim it – enjoy eternal renown; that their houses and their families are secure; that their souls being pure and obedient, are allotted a most holy place in heaven, whence, in the revolution of the ages, they return again to find in pure bodies a new habitation; while the souls of those whose hands have acted rashly against themselves are received by the darkest places in *Hadēs?*
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 3:8.5 (372, 374–75); cf. J2 pp.680–81, JCW p.515*

Josephus repeats more or less the same in *Antiquities of the Jews:*[5]

> (The Pharisees) believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them and that, in the afterlife, there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and that the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have the power to revive and live again (on earth): on account of which doctrines, they are greatly able to persuade the majority of the people.
>
> *Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 18:1.3 (14–15); cf. JCW p.376*

It must be added that there is some debate over whether Josephus is referring to reincarnation or resurrection, for there is no doubt that the Pharisees also believed in the resurrection of the dead. Possibly, the main Pharisaic view was that of resurrection of the dead, a doctrine understood by some to mean reincarnation.

The belief of the Pharisees and the Essenes is glimpsed in the *Wisdom of Solomon,* an apocryphal mid-first-century BCE text included in the Roman Catholic Bible. Significantly, it is written in Greek and stems from the period of extensive Hellenization in Palestine. Says the unknown writer:

> I was a boy of happy disposition;
> I had received a good soul as my lot,
> or rather, being good, I had entered an undefiled body.
>
> *Wisdom of Solomon 8:19–20, JB*

The observations of Josephus are also echoed in rabbinic literature of the Talmudic period (*c.*100 BCE – 200 CE). The *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers),* a second-century compilation of rabbinic sayings, seems to point to reincarnation, though – as so frequently in these early texts – the passage is not explicit, remaining open to other interpretations, particularly resurrection of the dead:

> He (Rabbi Akiva) used to say: "Those born are destined to die; and those that die are destined to live again; and those that live are destined

> to stand in judgment. Let men, therefore, know and proclaim and establish the conviction that He is God, He the Maker, He the Creator, He the Discerner, He the Judge, He the Witness, He the Plaintiff. In His judgment, praised be He, there is no unrighteousness; there is no lapse of memory; there is no favouritism and no bribery. But everything proceeds in accordance with an accounting. And do not imagine that the grave is an escape. For by divine determination are you formed; by divine determination are you born; by divine determination do you live; by divine determination will you die, and by divine determination are you due to stand in judgment before the supreme King of kings, praised be He."
>
> *Pirkei Avot 4:29, in PB p.246*

Similarly, in what seems even more like an exposition of reincarnation:

> He (Rabbi Akiva) once saw the skull of a man floating on the face of the waters, and recognizing it, said: "Because you drowned others, they drowned you. And those who drowned you will in the end be drowned."
>
> *Pirkei Avot 2:7, in PB p.235; cf. APOT2 p.686*

The first explicit instance of reincarnation in early Judaism is found in the doctrines of the eighth-century Karaite movement. Founded in Baghdad in 765 CE by Anan ben David, the Karaites rejected the teachings of the rabbis and the *Talmud,* reverting to a literal interpretation of the Bible in the search for doctrine and a way of life. Yet Anan ben David himself taught transmigration, although the Karaites after him rejected it. Formerly widespread, by the mid-twentieth century the group was reduced to around 12,000 adherents, mostly in southern Russia.

From the available evidence, then, it seems that reincarnation in early Judaism was a belief associated either with particular mystically minded individuals or certain esoteric groups, perhaps as an interpretation of the resurrection of the body. Reincarnation was not and never has been a doctrine of mainstream Judaism.

Transmigration was not openly and continuously taught in esoteric Judaism until the time of the early Kabbalah. The anonymous twelfth-century *Sefer ha-Bahir (Book of Brilliance)* refers explicitly to this belief in several places, one of these being a passage where Rabbi Raḥmumai is answering questions:

> "Why is there a righteous person who has good, and (another) righteous person who has evil?"
>
> "This is because the (second) righteous person was wicked previously, and is now being punished."

> "Is one then punished for his childhood deeds? Did not Rabbi Simon say that in the tribunal on high, no punishment is meted out until one is twenty years or older?"
>
> He said: "I am not speaking of his present lifetime. I am speaking about what he has already been, previously."
>
> *Sefer ha-Bahir 195, in BAK pp.77–78*

Because the *Sefer ha-Bahir* originated in Provence, some scholars attribute the appearance of transmigration in Judaism to contact with the Albigensians or Cathars, a Christian group of gnostic belief who were a strong religious force in Provence at that time. Others trace it either to the influence of the Platonists and Neo-Platonists, the Islamic rationalist sect of the *Mu'tazilah,* or even to Indian philosophies through the Manichaeans. Since the Jewish people were spread widely throughout Europe and the Middle East, possibly all these influences had a part to play.

Reincarnation and transmigration soon became an integral part of Kabbalistic teaching, especially in thirteenth-century Spain, the term used being *gilgul* (*lit.* rolling). The well-known *Zohar* says:

> Truly, all souls must undergo transmigration; but men do not perceive the ways of the Holy One, how the revolving scale is set up and men are judged every day at all times, and how they are brought before the Tribunal, both before they enter into this world and after they leave it. They perceive not the many transmigrations *(gilgulim)* and the many mysterious works which the Holy One accomplishes with many naked souls *(neshamot),* and how many naked spirits *(ruḥot)* roam about in the other world without being able to enter within the veil *(pargoda)* of the King's palace.
>
> Many are the worlds through which they revolve *(hafekh),* and each revolution is wondrous in many hidden ways, but men neither know nor perceive these things! Nor do they know how the souls roll about *(mitgalgalin)* "like a stone inside a sling".[6]
>
> *Zohar 2:99b, ZSS3 pp.302–3, JCL*

Kabbalists also taught that the transmigration of the soul from body to body was paralleled by the exile *(galut)* of the *Shekhinah,* the immanent divine presence in the world. They also saw the exile of the people of Israel from Palestine as symbolic of the exile of the *Shekhinah* in this world.

After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, turning tens of thousands into wanderers in an unfriendly world, many returned to make a home for themselves in Israel. Dispossessed, many also turned with fervour to the Kabbalah and to the mystical doctrines of esoteric Judaism. It was at this

time that Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–1572) began to teach at Safed in upper Galilee. The movement attracted large numbers, with students coming from throughout Europe and elsewhere. Among his doctrines, Luria also taught that souls transmigrate from form to form – that the soul can even reincarnate as animals or birds, but generally takes the form of another human being. For Luria, transmigration exemplified the 'cosmic catastrophe' that followed the 'breaking of the vessels' at the time of creation, when the divine sparks (souls) were released into the world of matter.

Despite the popularity and widespread nature of the belief in later Judaism, however, there was never the kind of all-encompassing, systematic and universal approach to reincarnation that is found in Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Manichaeism. In fact, although the belief in transmigration was widespread, it was understood differently by different Jewish mystics.

Some, for example, believed that it was only the *nefesh,* the lowest aspect of the soul, that would be reincarnated. Others believed that all the aspects of the soul – *nefesh, ruaḥ* and *neshamah* – could move into new bodies. It was generally believed that a soul was given a maximum of three transmigrations, except for Saints or holy men who could return an unlimited number of times to help humanity. Transmigration was also viewed as a sign of divine mercy or grace, since it gave the soul an opportunity to improve its spiritual status. It was also regarded as a punishment for certain types of sins, especially those relating to sexual behaviour, for those who chose to be childless, and for other acts perceived as misdemeanours. The alternatives to reincarnation were annihilation of those souls who had committed the worst sins, or perdition *(gehinnom),* a punishment that cleansed through its fire but did not extinguish the soul. Sometimes, the social prejudices of the day also found their way into the belief:

> If a man be niggardly either in a financial or a spiritual regard, giving nothing of his money to the poor or not imparting of his knowledge to the ignorant, he shall be punished by transmigration into a woman.[7]
>
> *Yalkut Re'ubeni 1, in TMT p.325*

Another Kabbalist text asserts that a soul will continue reincarnating until "he has thoroughly observed all the 613 precepts" – a particular enumeration of biblical commandments and laws:

> Most souls being at present in a state of transmigrations, God requites a man now for what his soul merited in a bypast time in another body, by having broken some of the 613 precepts.... Thus we have the rule: no one is perfect unless he has thoroughly observed all the 613 precepts. If this be so, who is he and where is he that has observed all the 613 precepts? For even the lord of the prophets, Moses our rabbi

> – peace be on him! – had not observed them all.... He who neglects to observe any of the 613 precepts, such as were possible for him to observe, is doomed to undergo transmigration (once or more than once) till he has actually observed all he had neglected to do in a former state of being.
>
> *Kizzur Shelah 1.2, in TMT pp.323–25*

Reincarnation of biblical patriarchs, prophets and other personages was also a source of speculation, just as the Jewish people of Jesus' time are said to have regarded both Jesus and John the Baptist as incarnations of one or other of the biblical prophets.[8] Sometimes this belief was justified by reference to a form of Jewish encryption known as *gematria,* in which the letters of a word are regarded as a cipher, although it remains uncertain whether or not this was understood as reincarnation or as a way of portraying the lineage from Adam to the Messiah:

> The sages of truth (the Kabbalists) remark that Adam contains the initial letters of Adam, David and Messiah; for, after Adam sinned, his soul passed into David; and the latter having also sinned, it passed into the Messiah.
>
> *Nishmat Ḥayyim, fol.152:2, in TMT p.325*

In a loosely related concept, *ibbur* (*lit.* pregnancy), the soul of a deceased holy person was understood to take up temporary residence in the body of a living person along with the existing soul. Essentially, it was as a form of possession. The extra soul would then guide the living person's soul towards spiritual improvement. Or sometimes the soul of a deceased person would temporarily possess the body of a living person in order to perform certain *mizvot* (commandments) which it had failed to perform when alive. In modern times, Jews still talk of a double soul inhabiting them on the Sabbath, which is a way of describing the experience of an extra 'dose' of spirituality. The idea of *ibbur* or possession appears in some Kabbalistic passages:

> Know thou that Cain's essential soul passed into Jethro, but his spirit into Koraḥ, and his animal soul into the Egyptian. This is what Scripture saith: "Cain ... shall be avenged sevenfold."[9] Samson the hero was possessed by the soul of Japhet, and Job by that of Teraḥ.
>
> *Yalkut Re'ubeni 9, 18, 24, in TMT p.325*

Here, the interpretation is arrived at by taking the initial letters of the Hebrew word rendered "shall be avenged" as the initials of Jethro, Koraḥ and Egyptian. Similarly:

> Know thou that Sarah, Ḥannah, the Shunammite,[10] and the widow of Zarepta were each in turn possessed by the soul of Eve....
>
> The soul of Rahab transmigrated into Heber the Kenite, and afterwards into Ḥannah; and this is the mystery of her words, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit,"[11] for there still lingered in her soul a sorrowful sense of inherited defilement....
>
> Eli possessed the soul of Ja'el, the wife of Heber the Kenite.... Sometimes the souls of pious Jews pass by *metempsychosis* into Gentiles, in order that they may plead on behalf of Israel and treat them kindly.
>
> *Yalkut Re'ubeni 8, 61, 63, in TMT p.326*

Although not specific to reincarnation, these interpretations do demonstrate acceptance of the idea that the soul has a life independent of the body.

Following the flourishing of the Kabbalah, the next significant Jewish mystical movement was Hasidism, originating in mid-eighteenth-century Poland with the teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov. The *Ḥasidim* also taught reincarnation. Little remains in written form, however, for most of these teachings were transmitted orally, but an abundance of legends has survived, as in a story concerning the past lives of Yismach Moyshe:

> Every soul has its own history, although this is hidden from almost everyone at the moment of birth. For the holy Yismach Moyshe of Ihel, however, the history of his soul was no secret. He knew that this was the third time his soul had entered this world, and he knew what he had been before.
>
> The first time, he had been a sheep tended by Jacob (the biblical patriarch), when he worked for Laban. Many saw with their own eyes the strange scars he still carried on his body from birth, scars left from the blows of Jacob, who was a very strict shepherd.
>
> The second time his soul descended, he was among those who followed Moses out of Egypt, and he was blessed to be among those who stood at Sinai. But he was also cursed to be a follower of Koraḥ, who rebelled against Moses, for somehow he had found the words of Koraḥ convincing. And like all who followed Koraḥ, he had been swallowed up by the earth, and punished in Gehenna. After that, his soul had been sentenced to wander for many generations, travelling from one world to another, never resting. Until, at last, he had been reborn.
>
> And how was it that he remembered so clearly that which everyone else has forgotten? When asked about this, Yismach Moyshe replied: "After all those years of punishment, the last thing I wanted was to forget. So before I was born I begged the angel *Lailah,* who accompanied me from one world to the next, to let me remember the

history of my soul. The angel conveyed my wish to the Holy One, blessed be He. And because of the merits of that angel, who pleaded my case, none of the history was erased."

Jewish Legend, Devet Bran (Nine Gates) 7, in GPJ pp.266–67; cf. NGL p.167

Hasidism persisted as a significant force in Judaism for around two centuries, with such notable spiritual leaders as the Ba'al Shem Tov and Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav, until its major centres were destroyed by the Nazis during World War II. Today, many of the Hasidic lines have been reestablished in Israel and elsewhere. Reincarnation continues to be taught by contemporary Kabbalists and *Ḥasidim,* as well as by other teachers of Jewish mysticism.

See also: **reincarnation, reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy), reincarnation and transmigration (in Christianity), sakhar va'onesh**.

1. Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a–249d.
2. Josephus, *Antiquities* XV:10.4 (371), *JCW* p.333.
3. Philo Judaeus, *Every Good Man who is Virtuous is also Free* 12.
4. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* V:15.
5. See also *Against Apion* 2:30 (218), where Josephus reiterates the same belief.
6. *1 Samuel* 25:29.
7. *cf.* Plato, *Timaeus* 42b–c; see **reincarnation and transmigration (in ancient Greek philosophy).**
8. *Mark* 6:14–16, 8:27–29; *Matthew* 11:13–15, 17:10–13; *John* 1:19–21.
9. *Genesis* 4:24.
10. *2 Kings* 4:8.
11. *1 Samuel* 1:15.

reincarnation and transmigration (in Manichaeism) The Iranian mystic, Mānī (c.216–276 CE), around whose teachings the religion of Manichaeism formed, taught that the soul goes round in the cycle of birth and death, including transmigration into lower forms, until such time as it meets a perfect Saviour, who brings about its liberation and return to God. This is demonstrated abundantly in the Manichaean writings found in Parthian, Middle Persian, Coptic and Chinese. One such hymn in Parthian hymn expresses the distress of a soul trapped incarnate in this world:

Who will release me from all the pits and prisons,
in which are gathered lusts that are not pleasing?

Who will take me over the flood of the tossing sea –
the zone of conflict in which there is no rest?
Who will save me from the jaws of all the beasts,
who destroy and terrify one another without pity? ...
Who will lead me beyond rebirths, and free me from them all –
and from all the waves, in which there is no rest?
I weep for my soul, saying: may I be saved from this,
and from the terror of the beasts who devour one another!

The bodies of men, and of birds of the air,
of fish of the sea, and four-footed creatures, and of all insects –
Who will take me beyond these and save me from them all,
so that I shall not turn and fall into the perdition of those hells?
So that I shall not pass through defilement in them,
nor return in rebirth.

Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān IVa:1–3, 5–9, MHCP pp.80–83

The writer is describing reincarnation into the bodies of animals, birds and other species as falling into "pits", "prisons" and "hells" where creatures hunt, kill and devour others. In another similar hymn, this world is described as the "pit of destruction" and the "dark valley":

Who will willingly save me from the pit of destruction,
and from the dark valley where all is harshness? –
Where all is anguish and the stab of death.
Helper and friend is there none therein,
never to eternity is there safety there.
It is all full of darkness and fume-filled fog;
It is all full of wrath, and there is no pity there.

All who enter are pierced by wounds.
It is waterless through drought,
and hardened by hot winds.
No golden drop of water is ever found therein.
Who will save me from this, and from all stabs,
and take me afar from all distress of hell?

Manichaean Hymns, Huwīdagmān V:1–6, MHCP pp.86–87

Souls in this world are "full of darkness" within themselves; nothing glows with its own innate light, as it does in the higher realms. "There is no pity" or mercy; everything happens according to the law of justice. "All who enter are pierced by wounds": everyone is the victim of sin or *karma;* no soul who comes here can escape their destiny. No pleasures or comforts, nor any

religious practice can save a soul from the troubles of physical existence. No one can find their own way out of such a labyrinth.

This may appear to be an overstatement, and there is no doubt that the poet is trying to attract the attention of the reader by the use of forceful language. But many other mystics have also spoken in similar terms of the state of souls in this world. Out of compassion, they try to awaken people from a deep slumber. But such is their state of madness, drunkenness, forgetfulness or spiritual ignorance that the majority of souls here are quite unaware of their plight. Moreover, the poet is writing with a purpose, and later on in this same cycle of hymns, the other side of the coin is presented, when the Saviour – the "Helmsman" or "Envoy" – comes to bring release to the captive soul:

When I had repeated these words, with soul a-tremble,
I beheld the Saviour as he shone before me.
I beheld the sight of all the Helmsmen,
who had descended with him to array my soul.
I lifted up my eyes toward that direction,
and saw all deaths were hidden by the Envoy.

All ravages had become remote from me,
and grievous sickness,
and the anguish of their distress.
The sight of them was hidden,
their darkness had fled away.
All was divine nature, without peer.
[There shone forth] light, elating and lovely
[and full] of gladness, pervading all my mind.
In joy unbounded, he spoke with me,
raising up my soul from deep affliction.

He said to me:
"Come, spirit! fear not.
I am your Mind *(i.e. Nous)*,
your glad tidings of hope....
I am your light, radiant, primeval,
your Great Mind *(i.e. Vahman)* and complete hope."

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:1–8, 10; cf. MHCP pp.138–41

The Saviour appears both outside as a human being and inside in his spiritual or light form. He is the *Nous* or *Logos* and the essence of everything. *Vahman* is a Parthian term used by Mānī, derived from *Vohu Manō* (*lit.* Great Mind, Primal Mind), a term used by Zarathushtra for the Word or

Logos, Zoroastrianism having been a prevalent religion of the Middle East, especially Persia, at that time. Continuing the hymn, the Saviour then reiterates the promise of all Masters:

From each dungeon shall I release you,
bearing you afar from all wounds [and afflictions].
I shall lead you forth from this torture.
You shall no [more] feel fear at each encounter....

Beloved! Beauty of my bright nature!
From these shall I lead you forth, and from all prisons.
I shall save you from all perdition,
and free you forever from all wounds.
Through perfect light [I shall cleanse] from you
all the filth and corrosion that you have passed through....
I shall not wish to leave you longer
in the hands of the Sinner;
For you are my own, in truth, forever.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:32–33, 42–44, 50, MHCP pp.142–47

The Master promises to release the soul from the tortures and "prisons" of birth and death, and from the grip of the "Sinner", the negative power. He expresses his undying love for the soul, and continues with great affection and compassion:

All you have desired of me, I shall bestow upon you.
I shall make new your place within the lofty kingdom.
I shall set open before you the gates to all the heavens,
and shall make smooth your path,
free from terror and vexation.

I shall take you with might, and enfold you with love,
and lead you to your home, the blessed abode.
Forever shall I show to you the noble Father,
I shall lead you in, into His presence, in pure raiment....
I shall reveal to you the holy Brethren,
the noble [ones] ... who are filled with happiness.
Fear and death shall no longer overtake you,
nor ravage, distress and wretchedness.
Rest shall be yours in the place of salvation,
in the company of all the gods,
and those who dwell in peace.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VI:65–68, 72–73; cf. MHCP pp.152–53

The Master will take the soul back to its native home with God. He will introduce the soul to the "holy Brethren" – the Masters and other pure beings who inhabit those bright realms. The soul will never have to leave their company, nor return to this world. This is the promise of all Saviours.

In another similar hymn, the Master encourages the soul to step out of the body – the "house of affliction" and the "dwelling of death" – and return to its "native abode", its original home with God:

Come, spirit, fear no more!
Death has fallen, and sickness fled away.
The term of troubled days is ended,
  its terror departed amid clouds of fire.

Come, spirit, step forth!
Let there be no desire for the house of affliction,
  which is wholly destruction and the anguish of death.
Truly, you were cast out from your native abode.

And all the pangs you have suffered in hell,
  you have undergone for this,
  in the outset and beginning.
Come yet nearer, in gladness without regret:
  lie not content in the dwelling of death.
Turn not back, nor regard the shapes of the bodies,
  which lie there in wretchedness,
  they and their fellows.
See, they return through every rebirth,
  through every agony and every choking prison.
See, they are reborn among all kinds of creatures,
  and their voice is heard in burning sighs.

Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:1–9; cf. MHCP pp.154–57

The Master points out the sufferings of birth and rebirth in the various "kinds of creatures". Come away, he urges, from the alluring beauty of this world, which vanishes like a mirage, leaving only distress in its wake:

Come yet nearer, and be not fond of this beauty
  that perishes in all its varieties.

It falls and melts as snow in sunshine,
  there is no abiding for any fair form.
It withers and fades as a broken rose,
  that wilts in the sun, whose grace is destroyed.

Yet come, spirit, and be not fond
of the sum of hours and the fleeting days.
Turn not back to all this outward show:
Desire is death, and leads to destruction.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:10–14; cf. MHCP pp.156–59

Come away, he then continues, to the "Height" and to your "native abode", your real and natural home. Your "pledge", your spiritual inheritance awaits you. Forget this world and all its anguish:

Hence, spirit, come! …
I shall lead you to the Height,
[to your native abode].
I shall show you the pledge, …
the hope you have yearned for.…
Remember, O spirit!
Look on the anguish that you have borne
through the fury of all your ravagers.
Manichaean Hymns, Angad Rōshnān VII:15–17; cf. MHCP pp.158–59

Mānī also taught that Zarathushtra, Buddha and Jesus had given the same teachings as himself, and a number of Manichaean psalms and hymns appeal to Jesus for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. One such psalmist writes:

Protect me in my corporeal existence, Jesus.
O Lord, save my soul from this birth-death:
full of love is your throne, bright.…
Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.67, ML p.107

The same teachings of emancipation with the help of a "great Saint" are found among the Chinese Manichaean texts from Chinese Turkestan, where the unknown writer petitions the "great Saint" to free him (or her) from "birth and death":

May I always have the vision of the compassionate Father,
and never again suffer transmigration
in the tortures of birth and death.
My roots have all been purified;
My mind will open and will comprehend,
never again becoming dull and foolish,
devoid of discernment and understanding.
Now I will follow and rely upon the great Saint,
the venerable Lord;

Never again to sink and falter on the road of birth and death.
Quickly, stretch down your compassionate hands of light:
never again discard and throw me to the race of devils!
Beseechingly and longingly I cry;
I petition with a sincere heart:
Bestow great mercy, and always shield and protect me;
Forgive me my sins and wrongs of past *kalpas* (ages);
Like many men and women of the past,
I am the bright lamb-child of the great Saint;
Crying and with flowing tears,
I beg relief from all my troubles.

Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.181:62–65

The same writer, exhorting himself and his fellow devotees to diligently follow the spiritual path, also equates *nirvāṇa* with the supreme spiritual goal, attained by remaining at the "gate of the right Law", the divine creative power:

We who are enlightened by the great Saint,
giving up all desires and passions,
must decide to be content at the gate of the right Law,
industriously seeking *nirvāṇa,*
leaping over the great sea (of this world).
I also tell you, O men of high degree,
blessed and virtuous:
Dedicate your mind to industriously seeking emancipation;
Strive, diligently refine yourselves, slack not,
and quickly forgo all the horrors of birth and death.

Manichaean Hymns; cf. LSMH p.183:85–86

The meaning of these and many other passages is clear: the Master will bring the soul out of the distress of birth and death to the land of eternal rest. It is also evident from their warmth and fervour that these writings stem from a living, vibrant, mystical tradition, from those who have inwardly experienced at least something of what they are writing about. These hymns are no religious litany or ceremonial words.

See also: **causation** (5.2), **karma, reincarnation.**

reincarnation and transmigration (in Mithraism) An ancient Persian religion taking the deity, *Mithra,* as its focus, Mithraism spread widely in the Roman Empire during the first three centuries CE. So popular was Mithraism,

especially among the Roman soldiers, that it once competed with Christianity to be the religion of the Roman Empire. The Mithraic mysteries also contained a belief in reincarnation, as witnessed by the Mithraic incantation:

> Being born from out the state of birth and death that being given birth to mortal life, I now, set free, pass to the state transcending birth, as You have established it, according to the way You have ordained and made the mystery.
>
> *Mithraic Ritual, in RR p.85*

In *The Mysteries of Mithra,* Franz Cumont describes these Mithraic mysteries in greater detail:

> Like all the Oriental cults, the Persian mysteries mingled with their cosmogonic fables and their theological speculations, ideas of deliverance and redemption. They believed in the conscious survival after death of the divine essence that dwells within us, and in punishments and rewards beyond the tomb.
>
> The souls, of which an infinite multitude peopled the habitations of the Most High, descended here below to animate the bodies of men, either because they were compelled by bitter necessity to fall into this material and corrupt world, or because they had dropped of their own accord upon the earth to undertake here the battle against the demons.
>
> When after death the genius (spirit) of corruption took possession of the body, and the soul quitted its human prison, the *daevas* (angels) of darkness and the emissaries of heaven disputed for its possession. A special decree decided whether it was worthy to ascend again into paradise. If it was stained by an impure life, the emissaries of *Ahriman* (the devil) dragged it down to the infernal depths, where they inflicted upon it a thousand tortures; or perhaps, as a mark of its fall, it was condemned to take up its abode in the body of some unclean animal. If, on the contrary, its merits outweighed its faults, it was borne aloft to the regions on high.
>
> *Franz Cumont, Mysteries of Mithra, MMC pp.143–44*

reward See **law of cause and effect.**

rog, karma rog (H), **karam rog** (Pu) *Lit.* illness *(rog) karma;* affliction *karma;* illness or affliction of any kind, due to past *karma. Rog* means illness, malady, disease or affliction of any kind, including human imperfections

such as pride, lust and so on. Guru Nānak says that, fundamentally, there is only one disease:

> Nānak, malignant is the disease *(rog)* of ego:
> wherever I see, there I see the pain of the same disease.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 1153, MMS*

Yet this one disease has many facets:

> The disease *(rog)* of pride has humbled the man;
> The disease *(rog)* of lust overwhelms the elephants.
> Through the disease *(rog)* of seeing, the moth is burnt to death;
> Through the disease *(rog)* of bell's note, the deer is ruined.
> All those that are seen: they, they are disease stricken *(rogī)*.
> It is only my true *Guru,* united with God,
> who is free from the disease *(rog)*....
>
> The whole world *(saṃsār)* is entangled
> in the malady *(rog)* of secular love;
> The sins are multiplied
> in the malady *(rog)* of the three qualities *(i.e. guṇas)*.
> In disease *(rog)*, man dies and in disease *(rog)*, he is born:
> through disease *(rog)*, he wanders in existences again and again.
> Entangled in disease *(rog)*,
> he is not permitted to stay anywhere even for a moment.
> Without the true *Guru,* the disease *(rog)* is never eradicated.
> He to whom the transcendent Lord shows mercy:
> taking his arm, him He pulls out of the disease *(rog)*.
> The fetters of him who obtains the Saints' society are snapped:
> says Nānak, the *Guru* rids him of the disease *(rog)*.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1140–41, MMS*

See also: **disease** (6.2).

sakhar va'onesh (He) *Lit.* reward *(sakhar)* and *(va)* punishment *('onesh);* the Jewish belief that all sins have to be accounted for; the law that every action automatically invokes its equivalent reaction, the reaction being contained in the original action itself, just as a rubber ball dropped from a height gathers the energy for the rebound as it falls. The Bible explains the principle using a number of metaphors. In the *Pentateuch,* the law of cause and effect is cited as an appropriate response to misconduct:

But if any harm ensue,
then thou shalt give life for life.
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,
hand for hand, foot for foot,
burning for burning, wound for wound,
bruise for bruise.

Exodus 21:23–25, KB

And similarly in *Deuteronomy:*

Thine eye shall not pity;
But life shall go for life,
eye for eye, tooth for tooth,
hand for hand, foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 19:21, KJV

However, the principle that actions recoil upon one's own head is expounded in *Proverbs* and the *Psalms:*

The one who digs a pit shall fall into it:
And if one rolls a stone,
it will return upon him.

Proverbs 26:28, KB

And:

The Lord is known by the judgment which He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

Psalm 9:17, JCL

In *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers),* a collection of parables and sayings from the Talmudic rabbis (*c.* 100 BCE – 200 CE), Rabbi Akiva gives the same teaching. Everything, he says, has to be accounted for:

He (Rabbi Akiva) used to say: "Everything is a loan given against a pledge, and the net is cast over all the living so that none may forfeit paying by escaping. The shop is open; the shopkeeper extends credit; the ledger is spread out, and the hand makes entries. Whoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow; but the collectors make their rounds daily, and exact payment, whether or not one is aware of it. They go by an unfailing record, and the judgment is a judgment of truth. And everything is made ready for the final accounting."

Pirkei Avot 3:20, in PB p.241; cf. APOT2 p.702

Similarly, in what also seems like an exposition of reincarnation:

> He (Rabbi Akiva) once saw the skull of a man floating on the face of the waters, and recognizing it, said: "Because you drowned others, they drowned you. And those who drowned you will in the end be drowned."
>
> *Pirkei Avot 2:7, in PB p.235; cf. APOT2 p.686*

In the *Zohar,* the principle is expressed through the idea that every action a person makes while he is awake creates a 'sound' or vibration. This is heard by "winged creatures, who carry it aloft to be judged". That is, all actions have to be accounted for:

> Rabbi Jose discoursed on the text: "Thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever."[1] He said: "Happy are Israel above all peoples, in that the Holy One, blessed be He, has called them righteous. For so we have learnt from tradition that there are a hundred and twenty-eight thousand winged creatures who flit about over the world ready to catch up any voice that they hear. For, as tradition tells us, there is nothing done in the world which does not produce a certain sound, and this soars to the firmament and is caught up by those winged creatures, who carry it aloft to be judged, whether for good or ill, as it is written, 'For a bird of the heaven shall carry the voice and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.'[2]" …
>
> Rabbi Judah said: "Whatever a man does in the day, his soul testifies against him at night."
>
> *Zohar 1:92a, ZSS1 p.302*

At another place, the principle of accountability is described in greater detail:

> Come and see. Man moves in this world and imagines that it belongs to him forever, and that he will always remain in it. While he moves in this world, he is put in (the) chains (of his own actions). And, when he is seated, they judge him in the field with the others who are to be judged. If he has a defence, then he is rescued from judgment. This is the meaning of, "If he has an angel, an intercessor, to vouch for a man's uprightness, then He is gracious to him, and says: 'Deliver him from going down into the Pit. I have found a ransom.'[3]"
>
> Who is the defence? His worthy deeds, which protect a man when he is in need. But if he has no defence, then he is sentenced to depart from the world. At that moment, while he is lying in the King's chains, he sees – as he raises his eyes – two figures (angels) coming toward him and, in his presence, they write all that he has done in this

world and everything that his mouth has uttered, and he gives an account of it all, and they write it down in his presence.

This is the meaning of: "Behold, He that forms the mountains, and creates the wind, tells man what his thought is."[4] And he confesses them. Why? Because every deed that he performs ascends and stands ready to testify about him, and they continue to exist to offer testimony. And then they all descend and are listed in his presence and stand before him, and they do not depart until the time arrives for him to be judged through them in that world.

Come and see. All the deeds that man performs in this world are preserved and are ready to offer testimony about him, and they do not leave him. When they take him out for burial, they are all there, going before him. And there are three heralds making a proclamation, one in front of him, one on his right, and one on his left, and they say: "This is so-and-so. He has rebelled against his Master, rebelled against the world above, rebelled against the world below, rebelled against the *Torah*, rebelled against His commandments. Look at his deeds! Look at his words! It were better for him if he had not been born!"

When he reaches his grave, the dead all rise up against him saying, "Alas! Alas! That this man should be buried among us!" His deeds and his words precede him, and enter the grave and stand by the body, while his spirit wanders abroad, in mourning over the body. Once a man is buried in the cemetery, *Dumah* comes with his three courts that are appointed for the judgment at the grave. They have three fiery sceptres in their hands, and they judge spirit and body together. Alas, for that judgment! Alas, for his deeds.

Zohar 3:126a–b, WZ2 pp.845–47

And again:

Furthermore – and this is the most exalted mystery of all – on the pillar set aside for the scales, amid the air that blows, there are scales on one side and other scales on the second side: scales of righteousness on one side and scales of deceit on the other. And these scales never rest, but souls ascend and descend, enter and return. And there are souls that are tormented, when man rules over his fellow.... Here we have the mystery of how the souls are tormented. This world depends entirely on the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and when the inhabitants of the world conduct themselves well, the scales tip toward the good side, and when they conduct themselves ill they tip toward that (other) side.

Zohar 2:95b, WZ1 pp.180–81

See also: **karma, law of cause and effect, reincarnation and transmigration (in Judaism)**.

1. *Isaiah* 60:21.
2. *Ecclesiastes* 10:20.
3. *Job* 33:23–24.
4. *Amos* 4:13.

sañchit(a) karm(a) (S/H), **siñchit karam** (Pu) *Lit.* accumulated, hoarded, collected or stored *(sañchit)* deeds *(karma);* that *karma* which has been accumulated in countless past lives and still remains to be worked off or to bear fruit in future incarnations. Even if an individual were to accumulate no *karma* in his current life (which in practice is impossible), he would still have his *sañchit karma* to account for. *Sañchit karma* is said to be 'stored' at the top of the region called *trikuṭī* (*lit.* three peaks), in the highest levels of the universal mind.

See also: **karma**.

sanskār(a) (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* together *(sam)* + action *(kāra);* something put together or composed; an impression on the mind, either good or bad; usually, in the plural *(sanskāras);* thus, impressions on the mind from the *karma* and tendencies of past births; the root impressions of all past thought and action; memories of past lives, usually unconscious; also, a predisposition due to such impressions from the past; an inborn talent, ability or instinct; also, impressions from early upbringing, traditions, associations and social influences; prenatal impressions formed in the mind of a developing embryo; also, in Buddhism, one of the five limiting *skandhas* (factors) and one of the twelve *nidānas* (links) in the causal chain of existence; a commonly encountered form of the more accurate, *saṃskāra.*

The term has early origins, appearing in Buddhist texts, as well as the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali[1] and other places. To Patañjali, the term clearly means mental impressions, one of the primary causes of suffering:

> To the wise, all misery is understood to arise
> from change, anxiety and mental impressions *(sanskāras),*
> together with the interplay between
> the *guṇas* (attributes) and the disturbances *(vṛittis)* (of the mind).
>
> *Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 2:15*

He also says that the impression *(sanskāra)* of *samādhi* (inner absorption) prevents these "other impressions" from causing a disturbance:

The impression *(sanskāra)* produced by it *(samādhi)*
prevents other impressions *(sanskāras)* (from arising).

Patañjali, Yoga Sūtras 1:50

The mind is deeply impressionable. Every thought and motion of the mind leaves its mark. Similarly, every outer action, since it proceeds from the mind and has a reaction in the mind, leaves its mark. All these impressions, of both the present and past lives, determine a person's basic outlook and patterns of behaviour. Nothing of the past is lost or obliterated; everything is carried forward as impressions on the mind.

It is the *sanskāras* of past lives which shape both the destiny as well as the inclinations, interests and talents of an individual in the present life. Such impressions account for all of an individual's tendencies, weak or strong, but are particularly noticeable in the case of childhood prodigies, where an individual may exhibit some skill, physical or mental, far in excess of their years. Some may be skilled musicians at the age of four; others are mathematical geniuses; some can play some sport exceptionally well, almost without ever being taught the game, and so on.

Instant likes or dislikes, fears concerning or attractions to things, places or people can similarly be traced to impressions from past lives, as well as from the present. Such subconscious feelings and responses, welling up within an individual, arise as much from the past as from the present life.

A Master or any soul who is sufficiently advanced can see these accretions on the mind from the past, and can thus understand why an individual does what he does, and why he thinks in the way he does. Although he will normally keep quiet about it, it naturally prevents him from judging others, since judgment and criticism only arise when a person does not comprehend why another person acts or thinks in the way he does. In the case of a Master, such knowledge makes him supremely capable of guiding his disciples, for he knows everything about them.

The meaning of *sanskāras* (impressions) is brought out in a letter by Mahārāj Sāwan Singh to a disciple:

> I have, with pain, read your complaint about your son. His wickedness and ingratitude seem to be due to impressions of past births which have become *prālabdh karma* for him in this birth. It is almost impossible to wash away these impressions of past lives. They must work themselves out, and are working out. Such things are not confined to your country only. I have had experience of such ingratitude and unfilial and patricidal conduct here also in our *satsang*.
>
> Therefore, all the Saints and pious men of every religion have laid stress on the advice that, during human life, we should lead pure and

> pious lives, free from enmity and hatred of others. If we fail to do this, then our impressions of hatred and animosity are liable to bear fruit in the next birth. It is useless to reason with such people. They will not listen to reason nor to appeals to their sentiment of gratitude and love. Only terror can restrain them from their unnatural course.
>
> *Mahārāj Sāwan Singh, Spiritual Gems 125, SG p.184*

A *sanskāra* is also a sacrament. In particular, it is a rite or ritual performed during any of the phases of transition in the life of a Hindu. It is believed that all periods of change and transition are fraught with danger, and that people at the threshold of such changes are open to suffering. Hence, it is deemed essential to depend upon rituals as prescribed in the *Shāstras* to ward off or counteract evil influences to prevent sufferings. Some of the common rites and rituals are *nāmakaraṇa* (the ceremony of naming a child), *annaprāshana* (when the child is given solid food for the first time), *karṇabhedana* (ear-boring), *chūdakarma* (tonsure of hair of a boy's head), *upanayana* (thread ceremony), *vivāha* (marriage) and *antyeshti* (funeral rites).

See also: **antaḥkaraṇa** (5.1), **karma**, **nidāna** (▸2), **skandha** (5.1).

1. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:18, 50, 2:15, 4:27.

sanskārī (H/Pu) *Lit.* one with *sanskāras;* one with noticeable tendencies of some particular nature; used, for example, for a person with a marked spiritual tendency, implying the presence of spiritual impressions from past lives. As Mahārāj Charan Singh wrote to a disciple:

> It is not difficult for Saints to know in advance the souls who have to come to them, but it is seldom necessary. *Sanskārī* souls, namely those who have already had such contact in a previous life, are easily spotted and we had several such cases in the lifetime of our Great Master, Bābā Sāwan Singh Jī Mahārāj.
>
> *Mahārāj Charan Singh, Light on Sant Mat 92, LOSM pp.165–66*

See also: **karma**, **sanskāra**.

sijn (A/P) *Lit.* prison; metaphorically, the material world; however, a *ḥadīth* gives a wider perspective: "The world is the true believer's prison and the infidel's paradise."[1]

Rūmī uses a wordplay on *sijn* and *Sijjīn* to point out how everyone gravitates to their "own kind". In this context, the "infidel" is the worldly person, and *Sijjīn* is the book where the deeds of the wicked are recorded or the place in hell where the book is kept:

> Every bird flies to its own kind:
> it follows behind, and its spirit leads on.
> Inasmuch as the infidels were of the same mould as *Sijjīn,*
> they were well-disposed to the prison *(sijn)* of this world.
> Inasmuch as the prophets were of *'illīyīn* (heaven),
> they went towards the *'illīyīn* of spirit and heart.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:639–41; cf. MJR2 p.37*

See also: **captives**, **prison**.

1. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, SM4* 53:2956, in *MJR7* p.59.

slave(s), **slavery** A slave is one who is forced to work for someone else against his will; this is the condition of slavery; a slave may also be legally owned by another; metaphorically, the soul incarnate in this world; also, the soul who is not free from the mind.

For as long as the pure soul is unable to free itself from its association with the mind, it can be justifiably described as a slave of the mind. Since the mind is the agent of the universal mind or negative power, the soul is a slave to that power, often depicted as a foreign ruler or lord. The soul in itself is free, being a particle of the Lord. But having taken the company of the mind, it is being held as a slave in a foreign land.

The first known instance of its use in literature as a mystic metaphor is probably in the biblical story of the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt, interpreted by many as the slavery of the soul to the body and the lower human tendencies. But the metaphor is an obvious one and was widely used. The first-century Roman statesman, dramatist and Stoic philosopher, Seneca (*c.*4 BCE – 65 CE), writes that "all life is slavery" of one kind or another:

> We are all fettered to Fortune, some by a loose and golden chain, others by a tight one made of baser metal; but what is the difference? We are all held in the same captivity, and those who hold others bound are in bonds themselves – unless you think that perhaps the handcuff on the guard's left wrist is less secure than the prisoner's. One man is bound by public office, another by wealth; some are disadvantaged by high birth, others by humble origin; some bow to the

rule of others, some to their own; some are confined to one place by exile, others by priesthood: all life is slavery.

Seneca, On Tranquillity of Mind 10; cf. SDL p.46, SME2 pp.250–51

The metaphor was current at a time when slavery was the common outcome of warfare. Since slaves could, on occasion, purchase their own freedom or be ransomed by their kinsmen, countrymen or others, the metaphor was commonly extended. The Master was thus described as the Liberator or Saviour who paid the ransom or head money for his disciples.

In the *King James Version* of the Bible, the Greek word for 'slave' is generally translated as 'servant', as in the passage from John, where Jesus speaks of the soul's slavery to sin, and the power of the Saviour to grant freedom:

Verily, verily, I say unto you,
whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin.
And the servant (slave) abideth not in the house for ever:
but the Son abideth ever.
If the Son therefore shall make you free,
ye shall be free indeed.

John 8:34–36, KJV

As Judas Thomas comments in the *Acts of Thomas:*

Lo, you are proud of (owning) a number of slaves,
yet your own soul from slavery you have not set free.
You are proud of the pomp of many (attendants),
yet you are not delivered from the judgment of death.

Acts of Thomas 135; cf. AAA p.269, ANT p.423, MAA p.232

Only a perfect mystic is free from slavery to sin. Hence, in the gnostic *Gospel of Philip,* the writer – being fond of wordplay – observes:

In this world, the slaves serve the free.
In the kingdom of heaven,
the free will minister to the slaves.

Gospel of Philip 71, NHS20 pp.186–87

The "free" of the "kingdom of heaven" are the Masters – who serve those who are slaves of this creation. Masters come to this world as servants, taking on the appearance of slavery. In a similar wordplay, in the *Acts of Thomas,* according to the mythical story, an ass's colt comes and stands before Judas Thomas, addressing him as:

Apostle of the Most High
and initiate in the hidden Word of Christ,
receiver of the secret mysteries of the Son of God,
who being free has become a slave,
and being sold has brought many into liberty.

Acts of Thomas 39; cf. AAA p.180, ANT p.383

Judas Thomas, here identified as the Master, is praised for taking birth in this world – for becoming a slave – and bringing liberation from birth and death to so many souls. According to an allegorical story told in the *Acts of Thomas*, Judas Thomas had been sold into India as a slave, by his twin brother and Master, Jesus.[1]

See also: **captives**, **Egypt** (6.2), **exile** (6.2), **freedom**, **head money**, **prison**, **spiritual ignorance** (6.2).

1. *Acts of Thomas* 1–2, *ANT* p.365.

Styx (Gk) *Lit.* hateful; from *stygein* (to hate); one of the two rivers of the underworld in Greek mythology over which the boatman, Charon, would ferry the souls of the dead to *Hadēs*, as long as they had received the appropriate burial rites. The other river was Acheron. A coin was placed in the mouth of the dead as payment to Charon.

The Styx appears in a number of Greek legends. The Greek hero, Achillēs, was dipped in the Styx by his mother, who held him by his heel. Achillēs thus became invulnerable, except for his heel. In Homer, the most binding oath taken by the gods was on the waters of the Styx. In Hesiod, Styx is personified as the daughter of *Oceanus* and the mother of Emulation, Victory, Power and Might.

See also: **Chinvatō Peretū**, **Pul-i Ṣirāṭ**, **Vaitaraṇī**.

svedaj(a) (S/H), **setaj** (Pu) *Lit.* born *(ja)* of heat and warmth *(sveda)*. *Sveda* means perspiration, sweat, moisture, vapour, warmth, heat. Hence, *svedaja* refers to those creatures born of warm vapour and water, or at the change of seasons. In general, it refers to the many kinds of invertebrate, especially insects, that emerge during the hot and rainy season in India and the tropics. *Svedaj* is one of the *chār khāni*, the fourfold Indian division of species.

See **chār khāni**.

tanāsukh (A/P) *Lit.* succession, reincarnation, transmigration; from the verb *tanāsakha* (to succeed each other, follow successively, to supersede, supplant, replace); coming and going within the cycle of physical birth and death. Traditional Islamic belief does not include reincarnation or transmigration, though there are a number of so-called heretical sects such as the Druzes and *'Alī Ilāhīs* who do believe in reincarnation. Islamic belief, however, does include a belief in the pre-existence of the soul. Souls are believed to have been created at the beginning of time, but to be called into human birth on only one occasion. In medieval times, the Hebrew terms *ha-atakah* (transference) and *gilgul* (rolling) were used by Jewish Kabbalists to translate *tanāsukh,* revealing the influence of Sufism on the *Kabbalah* and Jewish mysticism in general.

In the Islamic world, *tanāsukh* was and remains a heresy. Openly teaching it is condemned, and in the past could lead to dire consequences. Any offending books would be destroyed, if not the offenders themselves. Generally, mystics try to avoid controversy. Therefore, in a culture or religion where a particular belief would cause problems for themselves or their disciples, they are likely to speak and write about it only in a veiled manner. There have therefore been many periods and places in the history of the world when reincarnation has been considered a secret doctrine, taught only to initiates of particular schools. Moreover, if the mystics were writing for posterity, as well as for their own disciples, they would naturally be careful not to include anything that would result in the destruction of their work.

In any event, mystics are highly pragmatic. Whether *tanāsukh* is a reality or not, belief in it or otherwise does not appreciably affect a seeker's ability to understand and practise meditation and follow the spiritual path. Some mystics have explained more, others less, about the workings of the creation. Even those who have explained the most have left a lot to be understood when experienced face to face. In short, whether a mystic teaches reincarnation or not, as soon as his disciples have been able to leave the body, they will know for themselves the truth of it or otherwise.

Whether or not any of the most well-known Sufis, such as Rūmī and Anṣārī, believed in *tanāsukh* remains an open question. Much of the debate centres on the interpretation of passages in their writings which refer to the evolution of the spirit from mineral, through vegetable and animal, to the human level. According to Islamic and Sufi belief, these four levels of spirits are all deemed to coexist within man. Thus, says the argument against the belief in reincarnation, when Sufis speak of progressing from mineral, to vegetable, to animal, to human, they are speaking of spiritual evolution during one lifetime, from one level to another.

On the other hand, those Sufis who believed in reincarnation could be using the reference to the traditional understanding of the mineral, vegetable,

animal, and human spirits as a veil for teaching reincarnation. Thus the debate continues, and in the absence of anything definitive, the question will remain unresolved.

Concerning these stages of spiritual evolution, Anṣārī writes:

From the unmanifest I came,
and pitched my tent
in the forest of material existence.
I passed through
mineral and vegetable kingdoms.
Then my mental equipment
carried me into the animal kingdom;
Having reached there, I crossed beyond it;
Then, in the crystal clear shell of the human heart,
I nursed the drop of self into a pearl,
and, in association with good men,
wandered round the prayer house,
and having experienced that, crossed beyond it;
Then I took the road that leads to Him,
and became a slave at His gate;
Then the duality disappeared,
and I became absorbed in Him.

Anṣārī, in PMA pp.19–20

Rūmī is another who refers to these stages in a number of places in a way which could be taken to mean reincarnation or spiritual evolution within one lifetime. He writes, for instance, of man's evolution, finally rising into the world of spirit where he realizes that life in this world is no more than sleep:

First he (man) came into the world of inorganic things *(jamād)*,
and from the state of inorganic things *(jamād)*
he passed into the vegetable *(nabāt)* state.
Many years he lived in the vegetable *(nabāt)* state,
and did not remember the inorganic *(jamād)* state
because of the opposition between them;
And when he passed from the vegetable *(nabāt)*
into the animal *(ḥayavānī)* state,
the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all,
save only for the inclination which he has towards it,
especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs.
Like the inclination of babes towards their mothers:
the babe does not know the secret of its desire to be suckled....

The Creator, of whom you know,
was leading him (man) from the animal *(ḥayavānī)* state
towards humanity *(insānīyah)*.
Thus did he advance from world to world,
until now he has now become intelligent and wise and mighty.

He has no remembrance of his former spirits;
From this human spirit also,
there is a migration to be made by him;
That he may escape from this spirit full of greed and self-seeking,
and may behold a hundred thousand spirits most marvellous.
Though he fell asleep and became oblivious of the past,
how should they leave him in that self-forgetfulness?
From that sleep they will bring him back again to wakefulness,
that he may mock at his (present) state,
Saying, "What was that sorrow I was suffering in my sleep?
How did I forget the states of Truth?
How did I not know that that sorrow and disease
is the effect of sleep, and is illusion and fantasy?"

Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3637–41, 3646–53; cf. MJR4 pp.472–73

Rūmī speaks in a similar manner in the *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz:*

From the moment you came into the world of being,
a ladder was placed before you that you might escape.
First you were mineral *(jamād)*,
later you turned to plant *(nabāt)*,
then you became animal *(ḥayavān)*:
How should this be a secret to you?

Afterwards you were made man *(insān)*,
with knowledge, reason, faith;
Behold the body, which is a portion of the dust pit,
how perfect it has grown!
When you have travelled on from man,
you will doubtless become an angel;
After that you are done with this earth:
your station is in heaven.
Pass again even from angelhood:
enter that Ocean, that your drop may become a sea
which is a hundred seas of 'Umān.

Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz, SDST (XII) pp.46–49

Reincarnation is directly related to the deeds and desires of past lives. Again, in the *Maśnavī,* Rūmī speaks of the suffering experienced after death as a result of living an evil life. But whether he means a future physical life, he does not clarify:

> O you who have torn the coat of many Josephs,
> you will arise from this heavy slumber as a wolf.
> Your evil dispositions, one by one,
> having become wolves will tear your limbs in wrath.
> According to the law of retaliation, the blood shed by you
> will not remain unavenged after your death:
> Do not say, "I shall die and obtain release."
>
> This immediate retaliation (the laws of this world)
> is only a makeshift:
> In comparison with the blow of that future retaliation,
> this is a mere play.
> God has called the present world "a play"
> because this penalty is a play
> in comparison with that penalty.
> This penalty is a means of allaying war and civil strife:
> That one is like castration,
> while this one resembles a circumcision.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3662–67; cf. MJR4 p.473*

Rūmī also tells a story that comes very close to speaking explicitly of reincarnation. A chick pea, he relates, complains to a housewife at being boiled in a pot. The housewife points out that the boiling will bring out the flavour in the chick pea, that it is the suffering caused by cooking that will bring out its taste. By suffering, Rūmī means the divine longing which 'boils away' the sense of individual self. But, adds the housewife, this spiritual cooking can only take place on earth. On hearing this, the chick pea willingly acquiesces. The housewife says:

> "The caravan of spirits is incessantly arriving from heaven,
> that they may traffic on earth and go back again.
> Go, then, sweetly and gladly with free will,
> not with bitterness and loathing, like a thief.
> I am speaking bitter words to you,
> in order that I may wash you clean of bitternesses.
> The frozen grape is thawed (*lit.* freed) by cold water,
> and lays aside its coldness and congealment.
> When, from having endured bitterness (self-mortification),

your heart is filled with blood (like the grape),
then will you escape from bitternesses." ...

The chickpea said, "Since this is so, O lady,
I will gladly boil: help me all you can!
In this boiling, you are, as it were, my architect:
smite me with the skimming spoon,
for you smite very delightfully....
So that I may yield myself (submit) to the boiling,
to the end that I may find a way
to that embrace (of the Beloved)."

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4191–95, 4197–200; cf. MJR4 pp.234–35

Rūmī then continues the story. The housewife explains that she too was once uncooked. But after passing through the "inanimate state" "in the pot of the body" and becoming animal "spirit", she has now become a "teacher" to the chick pea:

The dame says to it, "Formerly I, like thee,
was a part of the earth.
After I had drunk a cup of fiery self-mortification,
then I became an acceptable and worthy one.
For a long while, I boiled in the world of time;
For another long while, in the pot of the body.
By reason of these two boilings
I became a source of strength to the senses:
I became animal spirit: then I became your teacher.

While in the inanimate state I used to say to myself,
'You are running (to and fro in agitation)
to the end that you may become
imbued with knowledge and spiritual qualities.'
Since I have become animal spirit,
now let me boil once more and pass beyond animality."

Rūmī, Maśnavī III:4203–8, MJR4 p.235

The story comes very close to reincarnation, but can also be taken in the alternative way. Rūmī was no doubt well aware of this.

See also: **āvāgaman**, **chaurāsī**, **gilgul**, **karma**, **maskh**, **naskh al-arwāḥ**, **reincarnation**.

tax See **custom**, **head money**.

tax collectors, tax gatherers, toll collectors (L. *publicanus*) Collectors of tax or tribute; publicans, in ancient Rome, *publicanus* being derived from *publicum* (*lit.* from the people, *i.e.* state revenues); mystically, *archons* (rulers or administrators) within the realms of negative power. The 'tax' or debt that is gathered is the debt of sins or *karma*. Judas Thomas equates the "rulers" and the "tax gatherers" in the *Acts of Thomas* when thanking Jesus for having saved him from their grip:

> The bound, whom you delivered to me, I have slain;
> The unbound, who is in me, do you set free,
> and let not my soul be kept back from its trust....
>
> The powers shall not perceive me,
> nor the rulers take counsel against me;
> The tax gatherers shall not see me,
> nor the collectors of tribute oppress me.
>
> *Acts of Thomas VIII; cf. AAA p.282*

Here, the "bound, whom you delivered to me" is the man's lower nature, probably an allusion to Jesus' analogy of the strong man as the negative power. A strong man, Jesus said, meaning the devil, must first be bound before his house can be looted.[1] Hence, Judas Thomas says that he has destroyed the strong man that Jesus had helped him to bind or control. And the "unbound, who is in me" – the soul – is now ready for freedom. Parallel with this, he says, because of the help given by Jesus, the powers and the rulers – the "tax gatherers" and the "collectors of tribute" – are no longer able to touch him.

In the revelational *Apocalypse of Paul,* a soul (in the fourth heaven, according to the narrative) is being punished after death for sins it had committed while in the body, and of which it had been unaware. The soul complains, but the "toll collector" or ruler of that heaven shows no mercy:

> The soul spoke, saying,
> "What sin was it that I committed in the world?"
>
> The toll collector who dwells
> in the fourth heaven replied, saying,
> "It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds
> that are in the world of the dead."
>
> *Apocalypse of Paul 20, NHS11 pp.54–55*

The expression is also found in the Mandaean allegory of the Fisher of souls, where the Chief Fisher (the Saviour) says that he will convey his special souls, his "friends", "past all the tax gatherers" to the Height:

I lead on my friends, raise them on high in my ship,
  and guide them past all the tax gatherers.
I guide them through the passage of outrage,
  the region where the fishes are taken.
I make them escape the fish eaters,
  but you (worldly people) will meet your end
  in your (material) dwellings.

I and my friends of the Truth
  will find a place in Life's *shekhinah* (presence).
Into the Height will I bear them
  on thrones surrounded with standards of glory.
  Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.159–60; cf. GJB pp.78–79, JM pp.160–61

See also: **custom, head money, publicans and harlots, remission of sins** (▸2).

1. *Mark* 3:27; *Gospel of Thomas* 49:98, *NHS20* pp.88–89.

toll See **custom, head money, tax collectors**.

transmigration The incarnation of souls in physical forms other than human.

See **reincarnation**.

tribute A tax payable to a ruling authority; mystically, the debt of sin or *karma* owed by the soul to the negative power.

See also: **custom, head money, tax collectors**.

udbhijja (S), **udbhij** (H), **utbhuj** (Pu) *Lit.* born *(ja)* + to split *(bhid)* + upwards or away from *(ud);* germinating, sprouting; from *udbhid,* to sprout. *Udbhijja, udbhij* and *utbhuj* refer to that which sprouts or grows; hence, the plant or vegetable kingdom; one of the four categories *(chār khāni)* of species according to traditional Hindu classification.

See **chār khāni**.

Vaitaraṇī (S/H) A river in Indian mythology, dividing this world from the next, filled with fast-flowing, boiling sludge, mixed with blood, hair and other

terrors; it is believed that all souls must cross this river before they can reach heaven; ruled by *Yama*, the lord of death. It is said that good actions, serving as a boat, carry souls across this dreadful river, while the sinful fall in. The origin of the legend is in the *Purāṇas*, where the story is told of how the river came into being from the tears of a disconsolate *Shiva*, after his consort, *Sātī*, had immolated herself.

According to a common belief, a cow has the power not only to swim across *Vaitaraṇī*, but also to escort safely to the other side anyone who can cling to her tail. Good deeds and a life of devotion are normally considered sufficient to earn a soul the privilege of the tail. Alternatively, a person may give a cow to a priest through the ritual of *go-dān* (cow-gift). The donated cow in its subtle form will then be waiting for the departed soul to provide safe passage across *Vaitaraṇī*. Alluding to this belief, Nāmdev compares the guiding hand of a Master to the cow's tail, and religious rituals and ceremonies to the stubby tail of the hydrophobic sheep:

So long as you are not attached to the Lord's Name,
  you are wasting your life in 'me' and 'mine'.
You are smeared with mud,
  and with mud you clean yourself.
You can never be clean, and you ruin your life.

Within you is dirt, yet outwardly you are clean.
You delude yourself, cleansing with water.
Says Nāmdev, you disdain the cow's tail –
  holding a sheep's tail, how can you cross this ocean?

Nāmdev, Padāvalī 2, Pad 22, SNP2 p.10

Stating his meaning more explicitly in another poem, Nāmdev says that while it may be possible to swim across *Vaitaraṇī* or to perform certain other impossible tasks, it is not possible to gain release from birth and death without a Saint:

To ascend to heaven on a ladder of sunbeams may be possible,
  but one cannot understand the importance of a Saint's company.
To reach heaven by swimming through *Vaitaraṇī* may be possible,
  but the importance of a Saint's company, one cannot know....
Says Nāma, greater than all other company is the company of a Saint,
  for without it none recover from the disease of birth and death.

Nāmdev, Gāthā 832, SNG p.310; cf. SN p.32

The myth of *Vaitaraṇī* has similarities with the Greek Styx, the Zoroastrian *Chinvatō Peretū* and the Muslim *Pul-i Ṣirāṭ*.

See also: **Chinvatō Peretū**, **Pul-i Ṣirāṭ**, **Styx**.

vāsanā (S/H/Pu), **vāshnā**, **bāsnā** (Pu) *Lit.* remaining; an impression remaining in the mind; present awareness of past perceptions; knowledge derived from memory; an impression remaining in the mind; a *sanskāra;* thus, fancy, imagination, idea; false idea, error; longing, desire, inclination, wish, hope; desire, passion.

See also: **vāsanā** (▸2).

wheel of birth and death A term commonly used for the cycle of transmigration.

See **chaurāsī**.

yīn kuǒ (yīn guǒ) (C) *Lit.* cause and effect; the Chinese equivalent of the Indian *karma;* the balancing of past actions in future results. Another term for destiny or fate as a result of the principle of cause and effect is *yièh lì.*

See also: **mìng**.

yoni (S/H), **joni** (H/Pu), **jūnī** (Pu) *Lit.* birth, life; as in 'in this life', 'in this birth', implying reincarnation; womb; female genital organs; source, generating cause, origin, fountain, spring; any place of birth or origin; thus also, seat, place of rest, abode, home. Indian mystics speak of 8,400,000 species *(chaurāsī)* into which a soul can incarnate on the physical plane. Traditional Hindu thought has classified these species into four kinds *(chār khāni)* of creature. In this context, *joni* normally means birth or life:

> When you reach the place of liberation,
> then you are not constrained to take birth *(joni)* again.
> *Charaṇdās, Bānī 1, Shabd 5, Chaupaī 1:15, CDB1 p.25*

> In *kaliyuga,* no one can go across without *Sat Nām.*
> The miseries of this birth *(joni)* are endless:
> *Yam* takes hold of everyone and robs him.
> *Kabīr, Akhrāvatī, Chaupaī 2:5–6, KSA p.4*

See also: **chār khāni**, **chaurāsī**.